

# Understanding Brazil for Foreigners

by Alessandro Nicoli de Mattos

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**Alessandro Nicoli de Mattos**

## **Fourth Edition – January/2015**

4. Minor revisions.

6.7. Updated

8. Section updated

13.4. Updated

14. Added “Myths and Legends” and “Foreign Influences” subsections

15. Added “Telephone” section. Updated “Cars”

16. Added “Brazilians and Latin America” subsection, updated “Jeitinho Brasileiro”

17. Added cultural references

18. Updated with 2014’s events

Minor updates and corrections

## **Third Edition – March/2014**

Added 3 comparative maps of States and Countries (Area, Population, GDP)

Updated Income and Wealth Distribution Section

## **Second Edition – February/2014**

Minor Revisions and Additions

Added Democracy Index Survey

## **Original Edition – September/2013**

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Genre: Non-Fiction

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my wife Laura for her work revising this book and for her support.

## Introduction

This book is aimed to provide foreigners with a head start to understand Brazil and Brazilians. It's not a "behavioral" book, nor an encyclopedia entry (that you would find at Wikipedia) or an atlas section. It's a compilation of the information that you would likely want to know if moving to, making business or just before a tourism trip to Brazil.

When foreigners think about Brazil, usually what comes to mind is one or more of the following: Rio de Janeiro, samba, carnival parades, Christ the Redeemer, beaches, Bossa Nova and the Girl from Ipanema, huge forests, women in tiny bikinis, UFC fighters, soccer players, *feijoada* and Havaianas flip-flops.

But Brazil is much more than these. This book will help you get past those "selling" images and tourist traps and get to know a little bit more about the real country and its people, both the bright and dark sides. I'm sure that you'll find discovering more about Brazil an interesting journey, while I'm sure someone will be amazed to find out that in Brazil people don't speak Spanish and the capital is not Buenos Aires.

This text intends to be concise and short, with the most important and interesting points, at the same time trying to be lightly funny and entertaining (but don't expect it to be hilarious). Many Brazilians may learn a thing or two about their own country reading this book as well.

Of course there are some traces of subjectivity in some parts, what would be naïve to not admit in such type of writing. Although the author tries to objectively stay with the facts, many may disagree with some points or comments, which you can keep to yourself unless you can provide constructive criticism.

## How to use this eBook

You don't need to read it in any particular order. If you want to know it all, just read it from start to end, otherwise, just jump to the section you want using the hyperlinked table of contents. The history section is on the end of the book on purpose, for those interested in more.

## About the author

I'm just a Brazilian citizen interested in knowing about other countries and peoples. I realized that many foreigners had no idea about many basic aspects of Brazil or had a vision so heavily influenced by the stereotypes of the media that I decided to put together this book to help out those trying to understand the country.

All the information presented in this book can be found in many sources and can be easily found in the Internet; I'm not revealing any secret here. Therefore, I'll be exempting myself of the boring task of citing sources.

# 1. The boring stuff first – Statistics and other numbers

First the boring stuff about countries. I put those on the first section so you'll think that the rest of the book is so much more interesting.

**Official Name:** República Federativa do Brasil (Federative Republic of Brazil)

**Common Name:** Brasil (Brazil)

**Capital:** Brasília

**Official Language:** Portuguese

## 1.1. Statistics

**Total Area** = 8,515,767 sq km (3,287,597 sq mi) (5th)

**Population (2013 estimate)** = about 201,000,000 (5th)

**Density** = 22/sq km (57/sq mi) (182nd)

**GDP (PPP) (2012 estimate):**

-**Total** = \$2.356 trillion (7th)

- **Per capita** = \$11,875 (77th)

**GDP (nominal) (2012 estimate):**

-**Total** = \$2.396 trillion (7th)

-**Per capita** = \$12,079 (58th)

**Gini Index for Income Inequality (2012)** = 54.7% (by the World Bank) (measures the equality of income, the lower the better; this number means high inequality)

**HDI (2012)** = 0.730 (85th) (Human Development Index, the higher the better, this number means high)

**Democracy Index (2012)** = 7.12 (44th) (the higher the better, this number means a flawed democracy)

**CPI (2014)** = 43 (69th) (Corruption Perception Index, the higher the better, this number means a middle ground)

**Summary:** Brazil is a big country, with a sizeable population and considerable economy. It presents a high inequality in income and in the development of its regions, and presents a moderate level of perceived corruption and a developing democracy.

## 10 most populous cities, 2012

**Position - City - State - Population**

1 - São Paulo - São Paulo - 11 376 685

2 - Rio de Janeiro - Rio de Janeiro - 6 390 290

3 - Salvador - Bahia - 2 710 698

4 - Brasília - Distrito Federal - 2 648 532

5 - Fortaleza - Ceará - 2 500 194

- 6 - Belo Horizonte - Minas Gerais - 2 395 785
- 7 - Manaus - Amazonas - 1 861 838
- 8 - Curitiba - Paraná - 1 766 761
- 9 - Recife - Pernambuco - 1 555 039
- 10 - Porto Alegre - Rio Grande do Sul - 1 416 714



*Rio de Janeiro, the most iconic Brazilian city. In the foreground the statue of Christ the Redeemer, the most famous art deco statue in the World. By Klaus, used under a Creative Commons License.*

## **10 most populous metropolitan areas, 2012**

**Position - Metropolitan Area - State - Population**

- 1 - São Paulo - São Paulo - 20 731 917
- 2 - Rio de Janeiro - Rio de Janeiro - 11 711 233
- 3 - Belo Horizonte - Minas Gerais - 4 882 977
- 4 - Porto Alegre - Rio Grande do Sul - 3 979 561



5 - Recife - Pernambuco - 3 688 428

6 - Fortaleza - Ceará - 3 610 379

7 - Salvador - Bahia - 3 574 804

8 - Curitiba - Paraná - 3 168 980

9 - Campinas - São Paulo - 3 060 556

10 - Vale do Paraíba - São Paulo - 2 258 956

### **Observations about São Paulo Metropolitan Area:**

As you can see, São Paulo city and its metropolitan region are huge. If the **metropolitan area of São Paulo** was a country, it would be a little bit more populous than Angola, just behind Syria, in world's 55<sup>th</sup> place. In regards to GDP (PPP), São Paulo would be just a little bit bigger than Switzerland or Austria and just behind Sweden, around the world's 35<sup>th</sup> place.



*São Paulo Metropolitan Area. This photo shows the meaning of “concrete jungle”. By Ana Paula Hirama, used under a Creative Commons License.*

## 2. Short safety and security guidelines when visiting Brazil

If you're going to visit Brazil and want just some **practical guidelines** for safety and security and no blablabla, here they are.

If you're going to a resort or a luxury hotel you don't need to care much about this stuff, since you'll be perfectly safe and secure and everything will be handy. If not, continue reading.

First of all, care about your **security**. The criminality rates in the biggest cities are high, so don't become a victim. You don't need to give up visiting Brazil because of that. You're not visiting a war zone, but it is not Geneva either. So pay attention at all times. Just observe some points and you'll be all right, like the other millions of people living there.

Try not to not look like a clueless foreigner lost in the city, screaming "I want to be robbed". So don't wear a Hawaiian shirt in the downtown of São Paulo, and keep your cameras and cell phones undisclosed. Backpacks and purses should be kept tightly with the body and in your front. No wallets or cell phones in the back pockets of the pants. Avoid using jewelry, expensive watches and something that could grab a robber's attention. Extra caution is necessary at night; avoid going to dangerous places during dark hours, and if don't know where are they, get informed first.

If you need **information or help** and there is no official around, contact an attendant inside a store, restaurant or hotel. Although many don't speak English, Brazilians tend to be very helpful to strangers and visitors alike and will try to help you out.

Only use **official transportation** means. Avoid illegal taxis and vans; they may be difficult to spot, so always try getting information first.

**Follow the rules** and respect the laws. It is not a lawless land and you can be arrested for bad behavior. Prison in Brazil is a very ugly place and you surely don't want to go there. This is specially true if you intend to do drugs in Brazil; laws are very harsh on drug dealing and users are arrested and faced with sentences as well. Some foreigners try get "smart" with the police or officials, like trying to bribe them or being disrespectful, and end up in the newspapers as examples.

If you want to visit some **dangerous** place, like *favelas* that are turning into tourist attractions, don't go by yourself: hire a guide or a company. These places are really dangerous, with drug dealers carrying weapons around and shootouts with the police being common. Also beware of using GPSs in big cities, especially Rio de Janeiro; there is more than one story of tourists entering into *favelas* guided by their GPSs to take a shortcut and that ended up very badly.

Have **cash** with you. Not everyplace accepts cards in Brazil. This is also a safety advice, since you may need an unexpected transportation or something, and only cash would be accepted.

Bring in **healthcare insurance** that allows you to use a private healthcare service. You'll probably not want to use the public healthcare system, neither pay a fortune in a private hospital in case of an emergency.

When **buying** something in a tourist area, if the prices are not already marked you can be sure that they will be set according to your face and you'll be probably ripped off. Consider that bargaining is expected in those situations, so try to get a better price; there is no shame in that.

If you're **driving**, make sure to have all the necessary documents with you. Don't drive after drinking alcohol. Respect the speed limits and red lights; there are plenty of radars and cameras and you'll

probably get a ticket if doing something wrong. The traffic may be challenging in some places, and jammed most of the time in the bigger cities, so patience is necessary.

The police sometimes make **blockades** and stop cars randomly to inspect documentation, search for illegal stuff and check if the driver is drunk (this is the mightiest fear of the drunken drivers). This is perfectly normal and you just need to collaborate. Those blockades are called “**Blitz**”, but don’t worry, the Germans aren’t coming and if you’re French you can relax now.

When **parking** in urban areas, mainly in big or medium cities, you’re probably going to be approached by “**car keepers**”. They will ask you if they can keep an “eye” on your car and once you return to get it, you should give him any amount of money (usually change money, like coins or a couple of Reais). Basically you’re exchanging a “vigilance” service for some “change money”. However, the effectiveness of this “service” is largely doubtful, since if a car thief wants to steal your car this person will probably run away or pretend that he’s not seeing it. Practically people accept to pay for this “service” out of fear of having their car damaged by this person. So, ultimately this is a kind of extortion, since you’re paying to park on the street, and in bigger urban centers and near events (like shows and sports matches) they may even stipulate prices that should be paid in advance. Although they usually look threatening, for the most part they are homeless or very poor people. Usually these people organize themselves by deciding which one will operate in which street, but in some cities this kind of service is more organized and “car keepers” even have uniforms, giving them an aura of “official”. In cities with park meters this kind of “service” is not allowed, since the government is the one charging you.

If you’re driving in São Paulo city, you should be aware of the **rodizio** system. By this system, cars with license plates ending in numbers 1 or 2 can’t circulate in the downtown region during rush hours on Mondays. The same is true for numbers 3 and 4 on Tuesday and so on up to Friday. The rush hours are from 07 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. The penalty is a ticket.

### 3. National Symbols

The national symbols of Brazil are the **Flag**, the **Coat of Arms**, the **National Seal** and the **National Anthem** (titled “Brazilian National Anthem”, a very “creative” name). I’ll only describe a little more the flag, since it is the most internationally recognized symbol.



*National Seal of Brazil. From the Brazilian Government website.*



*Coat of Arms of Brazil. From the Brazilian Government website.*

#### 3.1. The Flag

The Brazilian flag has quite unique shapes and can be easily recognized. It is also one of the few flags with inscriptions in it. In the white strip is the motto “*Ordem e Progresso*” (Order and Progress), borrowed from the Positivist philosophy. It also bears the green, yellow and blue colors, which are the national colors. It is composed by a blue circle inside a yellow rhombus inside a green rectangle, and a white strip inside the blue circle with the aforementioned motto in green letters.



*Flag of Brazil. From the Brazilian Government website.*

If you ask any Brazilian, probably he or she will explain that the colors symbolizes the Brazilian forests (green), the gold (yellow) and the sky (blue). But in fact the green and yellow came from the empire flag and symbolized the dynastic colors of the Emperor's and Empresses' houses. The blue circle was added after the proclamation of the Republic, and each star represents a State of the Union and the Federal District.

## 4. Administrative Divisions and Organization

Brazil is a **Federal Republic** composed by **26 States and a Federal District** that holds the national capital. This is much like the United States, with its 50 States and the District of Columbia. Each state represents a "mini nation", with its own customs and particularities, which is part of a larger entity represented by the Union. There is a level of autonomy of the states, but in Brazil this autonomy is much smaller than in the United States, with the States limited to define fewer aspects of the law and have less access to tax money. This means that the federal government has a very powerful and influential role in all the country, and also holds most of the money. The powers of the Republic are separated in **Judiciary, Legislative and Executive**.



*Administrative Division of Brazil: 26 States and a Federal District (the rectangle inside Goiás). The 5 regions of the country are indicated by the colors. By IBGE.*



## 4.1. Levels and Powers

The **first administrative level** is the Federal Government. The chief of the **Executive** is the **President of the Republic**, which accumulates the functions of Head of State and Head of Government. The president appoints ministers, which are the second tier of the government.

The **Legislative** in the Federal sphere presents a 2 chambers system. The first one is the **Senate** (*Senado*), in which each state is represented by 3 senators (in a total of 81), regardless of its size or population. The second chamber is the **Federal Deputies Chamber** (*Câmara dos Deputados Federais*), which features 513 representatives, elected by states in proportion of their population.



*Brazilian National Congress, symbol of Federal power. By Eurico Zimbres, used under a Creative Commons License.*

The **Judiciary** is represented by the **Supreme Court** and other supporting organizations and specialized courts.

The **second administrative level** is the State Governments (including one for the Federal District). This level presents all three powers. The Chief of the Executive is the **Governor** (*Governador*), and the Legislative has one chamber of representatives (*Deputados Estaduais*), the state's **Legislative Assembly** (*Assembléias Legislativas*), which number of representatives varies according to the state population size. The Judiciary has a State branch as well.

The **third and final administrative level** is the municipality. The Head of the Executive is the **Mayor** (*Prefeito*), and the Legislative presents the **Vereadores Chamber** (*Câmara dos Vereadores*). The role of the Vereadores is similar to the Alderman or Councilor at other countries. There is no Judiciary at this level. Note that generally every municipality is referred to as “city”, even if you’re talking about a predominantly rural place with 2,000 inhabitants. There are currently 5,565 municipalities in Brazil.

Since 100% percent of the Brazilian territory must be under the administration of a municipality, in the less populated regions (mainly in the North) there are very huge municipalities in terms of area; they cover lots of uninhabited forest areas. The largest one is Altamira, in the Pará state, which is about the size of Portugal, and is the second largest municipality in the World, but accounts with little more than 100,000 inhabitants. However, municipalities can vary extremely in terms of area and population, and some are tiny and very little populated.

## **4.2. Regions**

There is also a division by regions, which is not an administrative division, but a division that reflects groups of states with more or less the same characteristics and geographical proximity, and is used for reference. There are five regions, which comprise the following states:

**North:** Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Amapá, Pará, Rondônia, Tocantins. (7)

**Northeast:** Maranhão, Ceará, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe, Bahia. (9)

**Central-West:** Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Goiás, Distrito Federal. (4)

**Southeast:** São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Espírito Santo. (4)

**South:** Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul. (3)





*The 5 Regions of Brazil and their areas. By IBGE.*

If the regions were to be described very shortly and simplistically, would be like that:

**North:** The largest region, with huge amounts of forests and huge rivers, with a relatively small population. Economy is based mainly on natural resources and industry. Presents lots of Native American population and culture.

**Northeast:** The coast is well developed and attracts lots of tourism for its beautiful beaches. The interior is semi-arid, suffers often with droughts, and in most places the life condition is very poor. It's the region with the most states (9).

**Central-West:** Presents a swampy area known as "*Pantanal*", featuring big rivers and lots of wildlife, along with a high and dry plateau area. The rivers flood every year, forcing the cattle raisers to take

the herd to higher ground every year. The area is characterized by huge properties, mainly dedicated to cattle rising and soy plantations.

**Southeast:** The most industrialized region of the country, presents many big cities, including the 2 biggest cities of the country, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the latter being one of the biggest in the world. It is also the most populous and wealthy region.

**South:** A region often remembered as the coldest of the country, it presents many very well socially developed areas and a well developed industry. The Pampa (a grassland area) is a center of cattle rising and features the Brazilian cowboy, the *Gaúcho*. It is marked by the culture brought in by the waves of European immigrants in the 19th Century, which still defines many cities and communities.

Note that the size, population, social condition and development of the States vary greatly. The Amazonas state is the bigger one, about the size of Western Europe, with a relatively small population, while Sergipe is the smallest one, about the size of Israel. States of the South and Southeast are well developed, while some states in the North and Northeast are still underdeveloped and depend on resources of the Union to keep the government services. So Brazil is very heterogeneous, featuring regions with life conditions akin of poor African countries, while others looking like a developed middle income European country; in this sense Brazil may be regarded as a microcosm of the World.

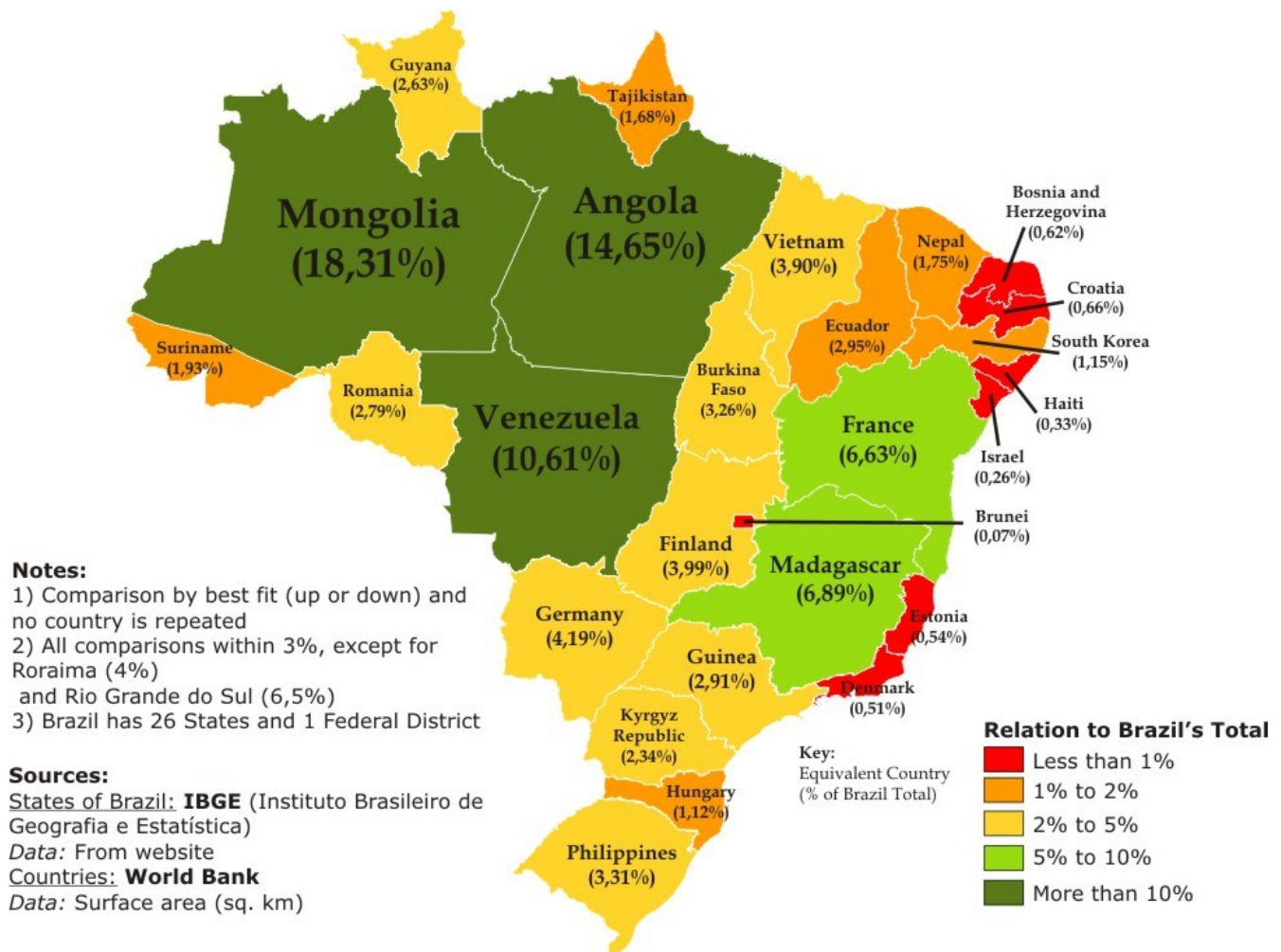
## 5. Geography

Geography is a very extensive subject, even more if related to a big country. I'm certain that you can find very complete and precise information on this subject on any encyclopedia. Hence, I'll attain myself to brevity and highlights on this section.

Brazil is the **5<sup>th</sup> country in the world in area**, and the **4<sup>th</sup> considering a contiguous territory**. Brazil is a little bit bigger than the United States contiguous 48 States.

But you may be asking to yourself: I'm looking to a World Map right now and I'm sure that the contiguous 48 States of the United States are bigger than Brazil! Yes, your perception is correct. The most common projection of World Maps is the Mercator projection, that enlarges the areas near the poles (the nearer, the more distorted), while the regions near the equator have little distortion. This is useful for navigation, but completely fails to provide a means of comparing areas. I can assure you that Greenland is not the size of Africa, but 1/14 of it, and that Canada is not larger than South America. But I digress.

The area of the Brazilian States varies considerably, with the States in the North and Center-West regions usually being particularly big, mainly because most of the area is covered by forest, jungle and swampy areas and their populations are small. Meanwhile, the States in the Northeast are small and numerous, mainly due to historical reasons. The following map compares the area of Brazilian States to countries and shows the relation of each State area to the Brazil's total.



*Brazil states areas compared to countries with similar sizes. The percentage and the colors indicate the relation of each state to the country's total. By the author.*

Brazil occupies **47% of South America area**, and have an extensive land border shared with all South American countries (even tough French Guyana is not actually a country), except for Chile and Ecuador.

The **coast is very long** (7,491 km), bathed by the South Atlantic Ocean. Brazil has ownership of some rocks and atolls in the Atlantic Ocean, but the most significant eastward possession is the island of Fernando de Noronha, a natural reserve and tourist destination.



*Extreme points of continental Brazil. By Deyvid Aleksandr Raffo Setti; used under a Creative Commons license.*

## 5.1. Physical

Brazilian topography is dominated by **plains** and **plateaus** at low altitudes, with some mountain groups (called “*Serras*”) and some hilly areas mainly in the southeast and south regions. There are no big mountain chains, like the Andes, Alps or the Rocky Mountains.

The highest point is the **Pico da Neblina** (Fog Peak) in the border with Venezuela, with little less than 3,000 meters (1.86 mi) of altitude, and only discovered in the 1950s (since it is covered with fog most of the time). The highest city is Campos do Jordão, São Paulo state, at 1,628 m (1 mi).

There are no volcanoes and no incidence of earthquakes (although some vibration from earthquakes in Chile has been sensed by seismographs in Brazil). Waterfalls are common throughout the country,



being the **Cataratas do Iguaçu** (Iguazu Falls) the bigger and most famous one. No significant lakes are present.



*Physical map of Brazil. Most of the country presents low altitudes. By João Felipe C.S., used under a Creative Commons License.*

## 5.2. Climate

The climate varies from equatorial to subtropical, but most of it is tropical, with some semiarid and arid regions in the Northeast (known as *sertão*).

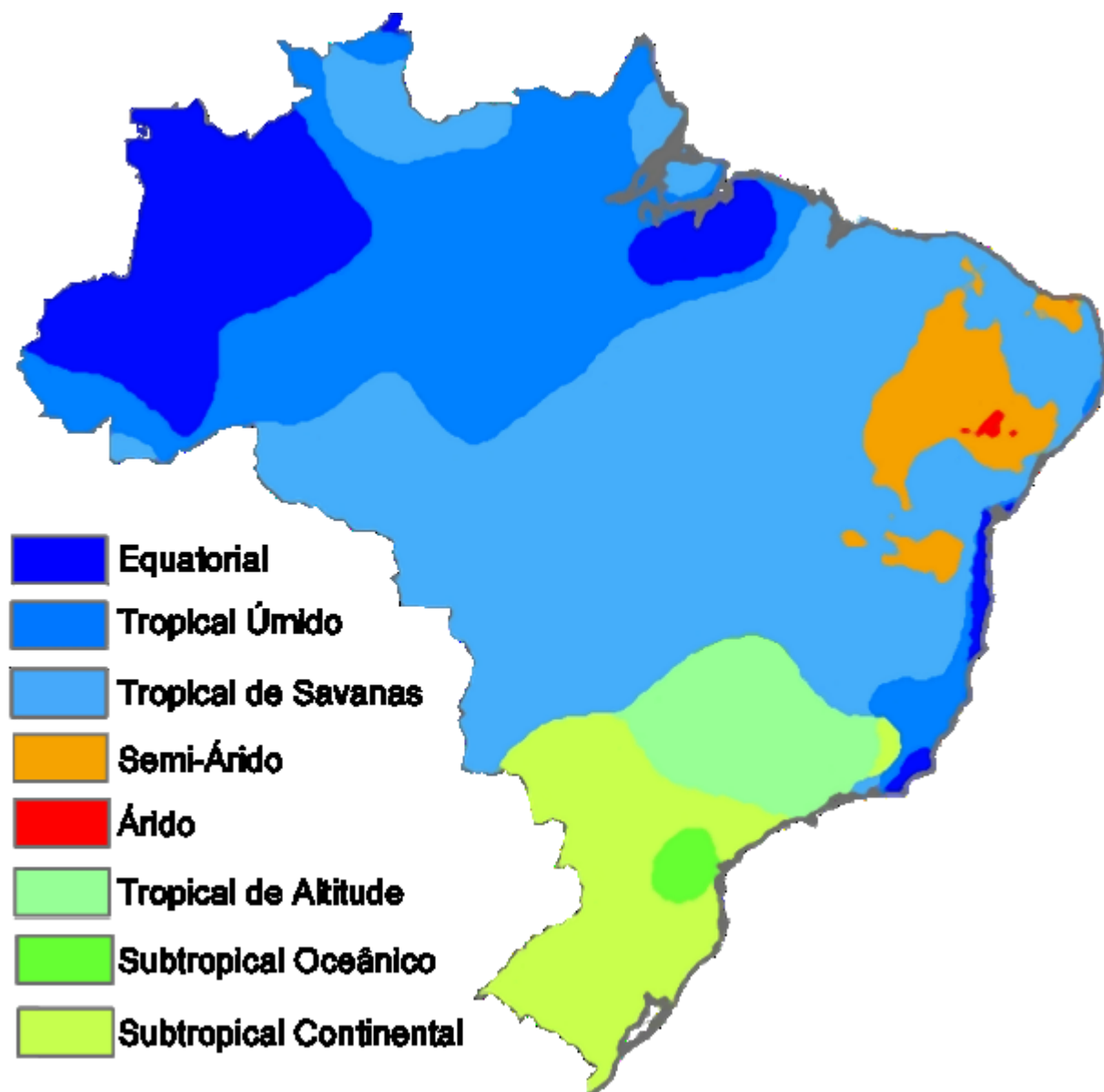
The climate in the North region is **equatorial** and **humid tropical**, with high precipitation rates, high temperatures and low variation throughout the year. The seasons of the year are not clearly defined

in the general sense of seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter), but related to the rate of precipitations, divided into dry and rainy seasons; or, more commonly along the rivers, as flooding and dry seasons, since the river depth variation may reach many meters and is central to the life of communities along the river.

Seasons in the **semiarid** regions of Northeast are also divided in rainy and dry seasons, although in some years the rain fails to come and causes a drought in the region, mainly occupied by small animal raising farms and subsistence agriculture.

Most of the country has a climate known as **savannah tropical**, with a reasonable temperature variation during the year, with a humid and rainy summer, and a dry and light winter.

The coast mostly presents a humid tropical or savannah tropical climate. Tropical cyclones occur, but are rare.



*Climate map of Brazil. Most of the country is tropical, with variations, according to the Köppen-Geiger classification. Work derived from Peel, M. C., Finlayson, B. L., and McMahon, T. A., used under a Creative Commons License.*

The state of São Paulo and parts of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Paraná and smaller portions of others present a climate known as **altitude tropical**. It presents higher temperature variations than those in the northernmost regions. It is susceptible to heavy rainfall and thunderstorms, especially in the summer in the months of February and March. This region suffers every year with flooding and landslides (since the terrain in this region is usually hilly), which every summer claim lives and cause destruction. Big cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro have severe problems with flooding, since the sewer system can't flow all the water from heavy thunderstorms and the cities are highly impervious.

The climate in the South is **subtropical**, with the lower temperatures in the whole country, and the seasons are well defined. Ground frost is frequent in the winter, and snowfall is not common, but happens sometimes in very specific places.

### 5.3. Time Zones

Brazil has its bigger extent in the north-south axis, and so does not present many time zones. There are 3 time zones, from -2 to -4 hours from the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

The **-2 hours from GMT time zone** includes only islands in the Atlantic Ocean. Most of the country and a high percentage of the population fall within the **"Brasilia Time"**, which is **-3 hours from GMT** and is considered the official one. The last one is **-4 hours from GMT**, and covers the most westernmost states.

A **daylight saving time** (when clocks are moved one hour forward) is adopted from October to February in the Center-West, Southeast and South regions. The northernmost states do not participate, since daylight saving time makes no sense nearer the Equator, where the day length remains constant all year long.





*Time zones of Brazil and daylight saving time area represented. By Rosso Robot, used under a Creative Commons license.*

## 5.4. Fauna and Flora

Since Brazil is very often remembered by its forests, I thought a good idea to include something about vegetation here. Next time you see a movie depicting the Amazon forest just 30 minutes away from Rio de Janeiro or monkeys living free in the cities of São Paulo state, you'll know that you're being fooled.

The vegetation and fauna of the country is very diverse, so let's concentrate on the biomes.

The **Amazon forest** (*Floresta Amazônica*) is a tropical rain forest and covers almost all the North region, and parts of the Center-West. The agricultural frontier is advancing towards the North, causing



a mass devastation of the forest, which fortunately is decreasing over the years with the help of satellite imagery and police action.

The Amazon features huge rivers, tall trees and immense biodiversity of fish, birds, insects, mammals (including primates), and others. The most famous ones are the *boto-cor-de-rosa* (Amazon river dolphin), the manatee, *micos* (tamarins), *araras* (macaws) and the *bicho-preguiça* (sloth). It's good to remember that while Brazil occupies a large portion of the Amazon forest, other neighboring countries also have their share of this important biome.

The forest supplies valuable timbers and plants that all the time is discovered to have some special property. The area has a very low population and is huge (about the size of Western Europe or 2,5 times the United States' Midwest), so if you're flying over it, you'll see a "sea of trees" for a long time. If your plane crashes, hope to remember your jungle survival course!

An important tropical forest is the **Atlantic Forest** (*Mata Atlântica*), which used to cover the coast and part of the interior from the Brazilian Northeast to Argentina. This forest was the home of **Brazilwood**, the valuable tree that gave the name to the country and that after overexploitation almost went into extinction. After centuries of deforestation, the Atlantic Forest currently holds only 7% of its original area in Brazil, most of it in National Parks and in fragments. It holds a highly diverse fauna and flora, and is much appreciated for tourism.

The Center-West and parts of the Northeast are comprised of savannahs (known as "*cerrado*"). The **cerrado** presents mainly bushes and trees with typical twisted trunks and profound roots, and a large diversity of insects. A typical animal is the *tatu-bola* (armadillo) that was chosen as the mascot for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. During the dry season spontaneous fires are observed.

The **caatinga** is typical from the semiarid regions in the Northeast, and present mainly cactus and palms that dry and sprout seasonally.

The **pantanal** is a swampy region in parts of the Center-West that features vegetations typical from other environments, like forests, *cerrado* and *caatinga*, but is characterized by areas that are flooded every year. Its fauna is very rich and is a tourist attraction, especially for fishermen looking for big river fishes. Caymans (a smaller crocodile like reptile) and large birds are spread throughout this biome. Another animal present in this region (and in others throughout the country) is the *onça-pintada* (a beautiful jaguar with black spots), although very difficult to be observed.

The **Araucária Forest** is present mostly in the south region and in some high altitude areas of other states. The *Araucária* is the South American conifer and has been extensively extracted to manufacture furniture and paper, and today accounts with about 5% of its original area.

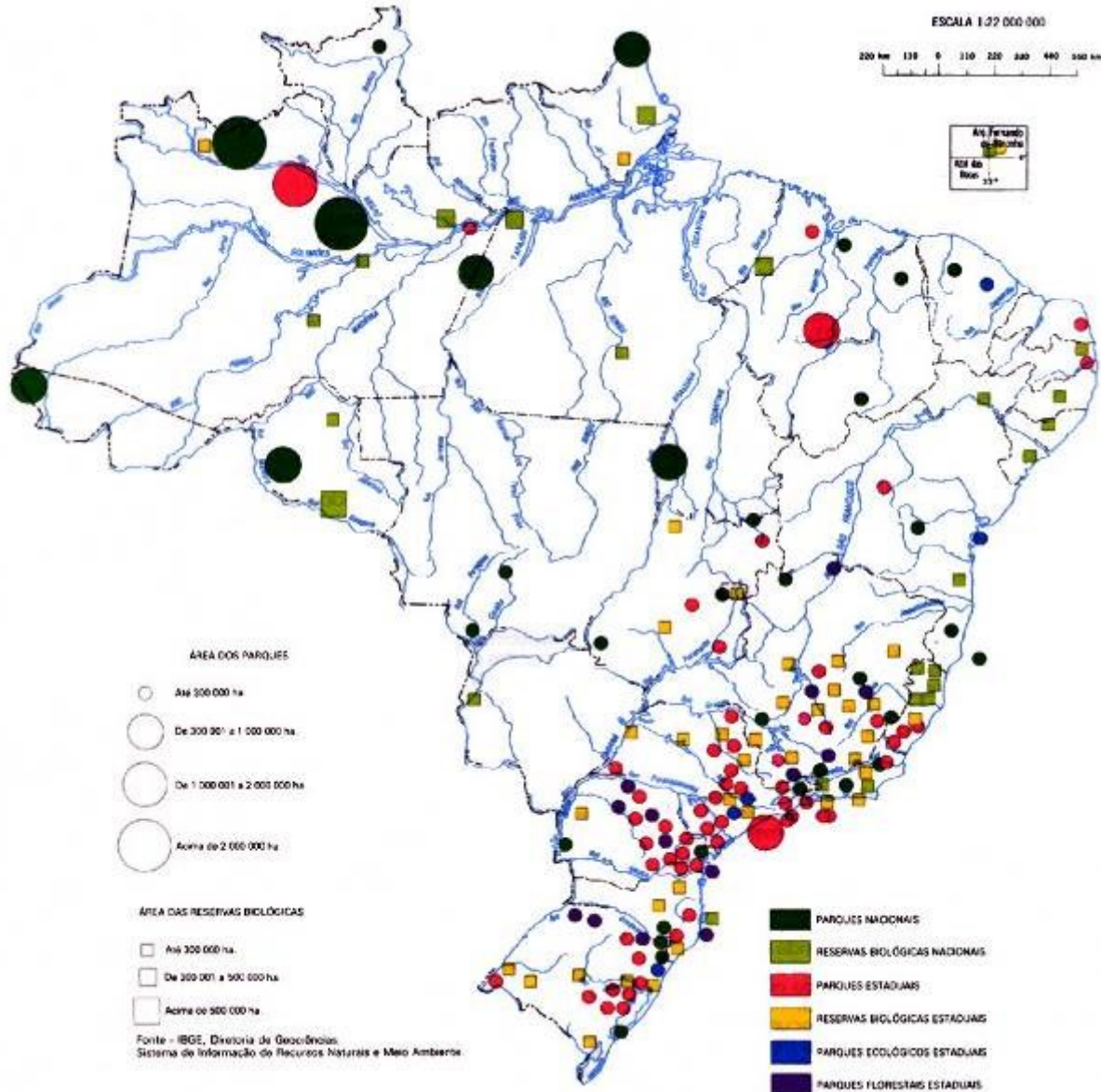
The **pampas** are prairies located in the extreme south of Brazil and are characterized by cattle rising.

Although controversial, Brazil is believed to have the largest diversity of fresh water fishes (around 2,100 different species). Other numbers of identified species are also huge: more than 7,800 of trees, 370 of snakes, 517 of amphibians, 1,832 of birds and an amazing 90,200 of insects.

## 5.5. Conservation Units and Indigenous Territories

Conservation Units (*Unidades de Conservação*, or UCs) and Indigenous Territories (*Territórios Indígenas*, or TIs) are special territorial entities that comprise a significant amount of the national area.

**Conservation Units** are areas created and protected by federal or state law in order to preserve the environment and allow a sustainable economic development. Each unit is classified according to a series of classes, which specify the nature of the unit and the activities that can be held, like tourism, sustainable exploration, human occupation and so on. The areas of all UCs represent about 15% of the national territory.



*Map of all Conservation Units (UCs) in Brazil, by size and classification. By IBGE.*

**Indigenous Territories** are areas occupied by Native Americans in which they can preserve their subsistence and way of life. These areas are created and protected by law, and demarcation is still going on and is managed by **FUNAI** (*Fundação Nacional do Índio*), a government organization. They comprise roughly 13% of the national territory, mainly in the Amazon area and states (in the case of Roraima state, it comprises about 87% of the state's area). The demarcation process is subject to much debate, with land owners, land reform militants and mining companies highlighting that too

much land reserved may hinder economic development, and indigenous representatives criticizing the slow pace of the demarcation process.



*Map of all Indigenous Territories (or Indian Reserves) in Brazil. From Wikipedia, under Public Domain.*

Together, Conservation Units and Indigenous Territories correspond to about 28% of the country territory, what amounts to the equivalent area of countries like Algeria or the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## 6. Demographics

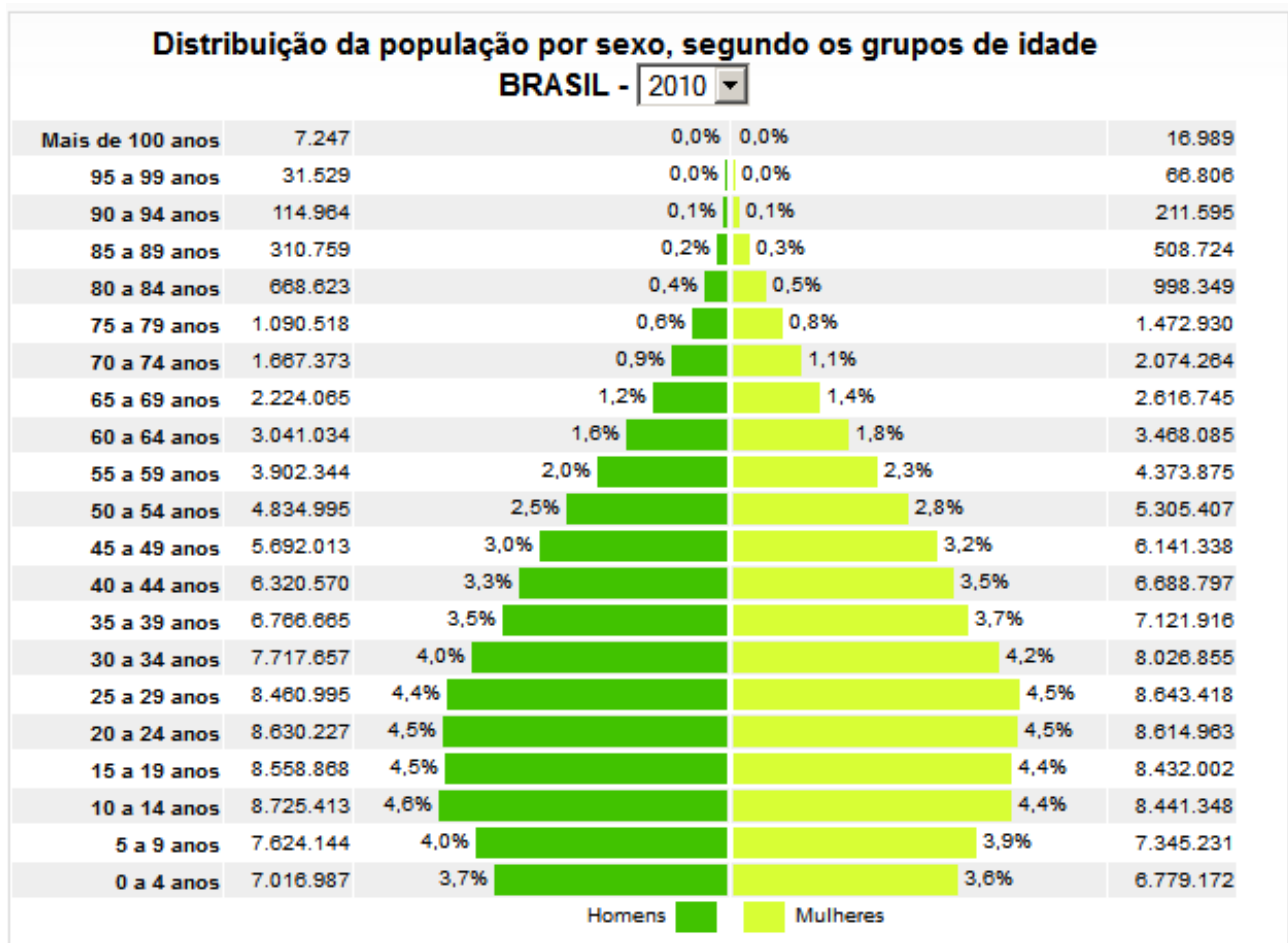
As with geography, demographics are a very extensive subject, even more on a complex and unequal society as Brazil. I'm certain that you can find very complete and precise information on this subject on any encyclopedia. Therefore, I'll highlight the most important points on this section.

### 6.1. Population, Growth and Aging

It is estimated that currently Brazil has roughly **201 million inhabitants**. Just for comparison, this is about 2/3 of the United States population, and a little bit more than Russia's. Brazil is the **5<sup>th</sup> most populous country** (and it's also the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in area). The census is performed periodically by the IBGE (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*), a government institute which is reference for demographic and geographic information.

The population growth is slowing down. The population growth is currently about 1.12% per year, a low rate, mostly driven by the vegetative population growth since immigration does not present significant numbers. The national average of fertility rate (1.86 children/woman) is below the world average (2.55 children/woman). It is estimated that by 2040 the population will begin to decrease (of course, depending on the continuation of such trends).

Brazil has always considered itself a country of young people. Not so many decades ago the majority of the population was indeed young, but with the increase in life expectancy (69 years for males, 76 for females, a little below developed countries) and decrease in fertility rates, the population is aging. Right now the country is living what is called a **demographic bonus**, in which most of the population is in their working years, in comparison to retirees, children and students.



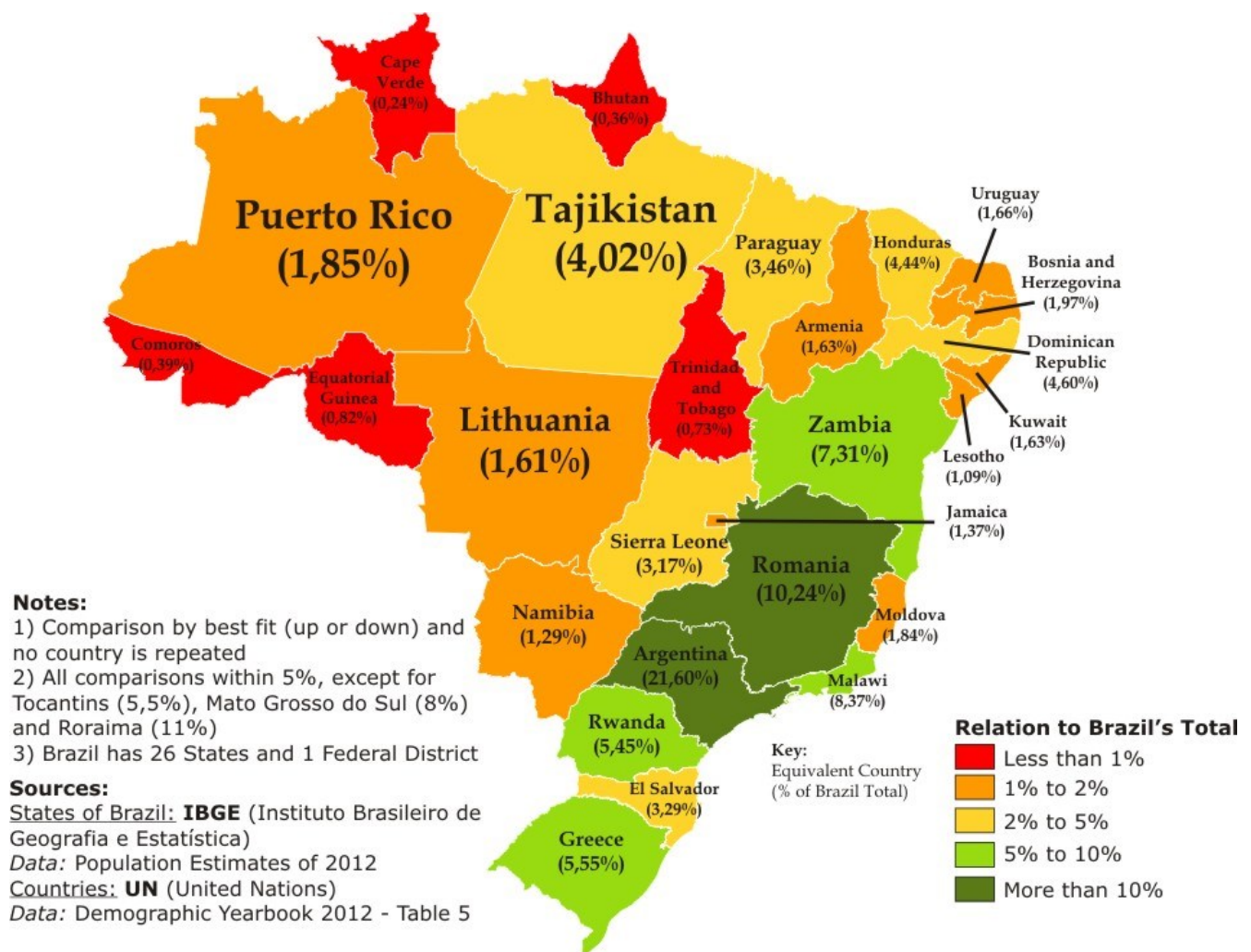
*Population pyramid, according to the 2010 Census by IBGE. From IBGE website.*

## 6.2. Population Distribution

The distribution of the population is very **uneven** in Brazil. The majority of the population lives in a strip of about 300 kilometers from the coast. This pattern is observed mainly due to historical reasons, since the European colonization started on the coast and the interior presented a harsh environment, especially in the areas covered by forests and jungle. More serious efforts to settle the interior started in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but still the pattern is largely preserved.

This uneven population distribution affects the overall population distribution between the States, causing an imbalance between the Federation Units. The states from the North region have especially small populations, since most of the region is covered by jungle and more serious settlement began only on the last decades. Meanwhile, the Center-West is receiving migration from other regions, mainly due to the agricultural frontier that is advancing towards the North and over the forest. The following map compares the population of Brazilian States to countries and shows the State population in relation to the Brazil's total.

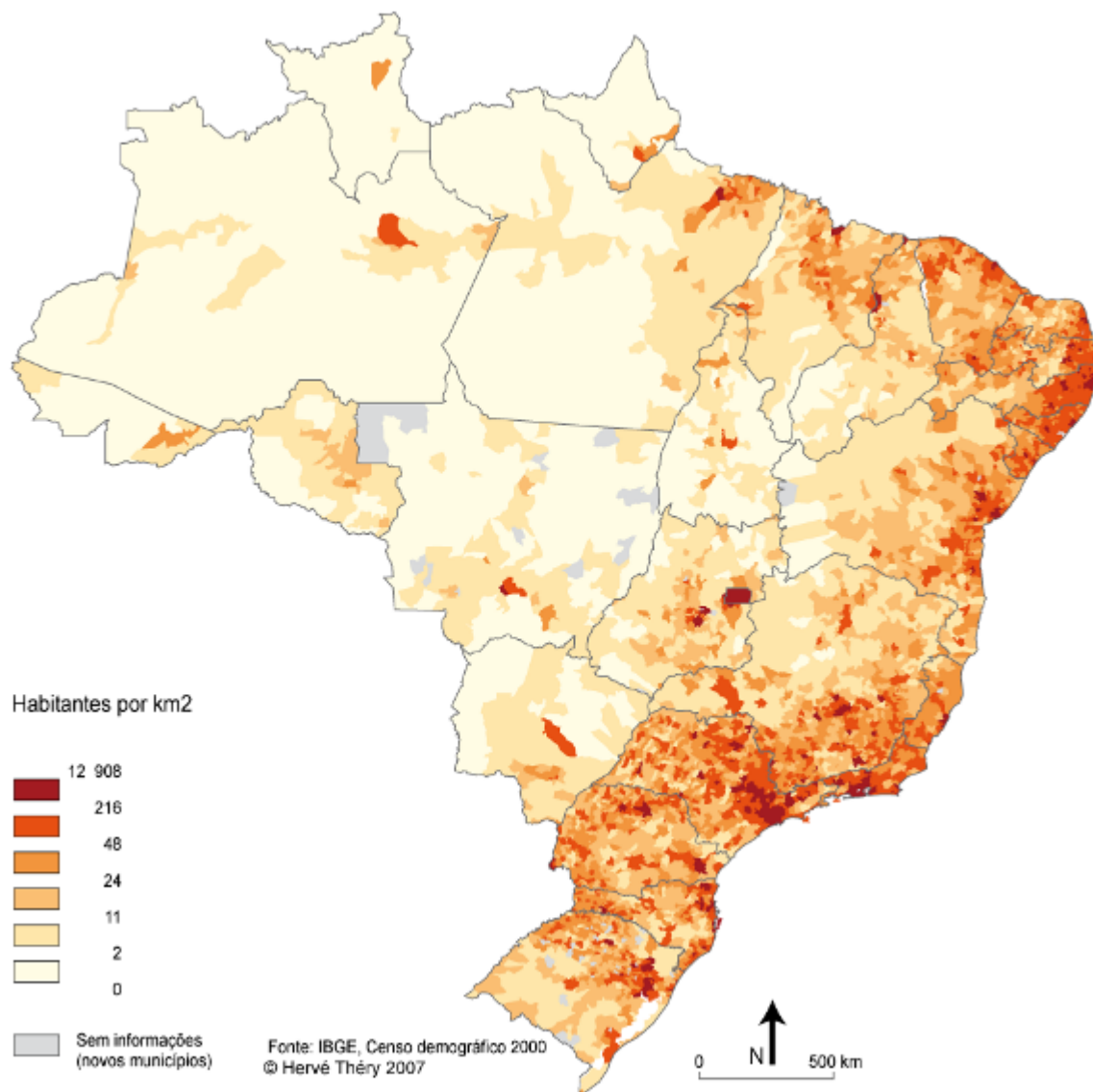




*Brazil states population compared to countries with similar populations. The percentage and the colors indicate the relation of each state to the country's total. By the author.*

The average population density of Brazil is 22.43 inhabitants/sq km, what is very low (in the United States it is 34.2/sq km, while in Japan it reaches 377/sq km). In **São Paulo** state, the most populous state, the average is 166.2/sq km, while in the **Amazonas** state, comprised mainly by areas covered by forest and jungle, the density reaches 2.29/sq km. The Amazon region that covers most of the North region is considered a “**demographic empty**”, since there is no or very little human presence on very large areas.

## Densidade de povoamento

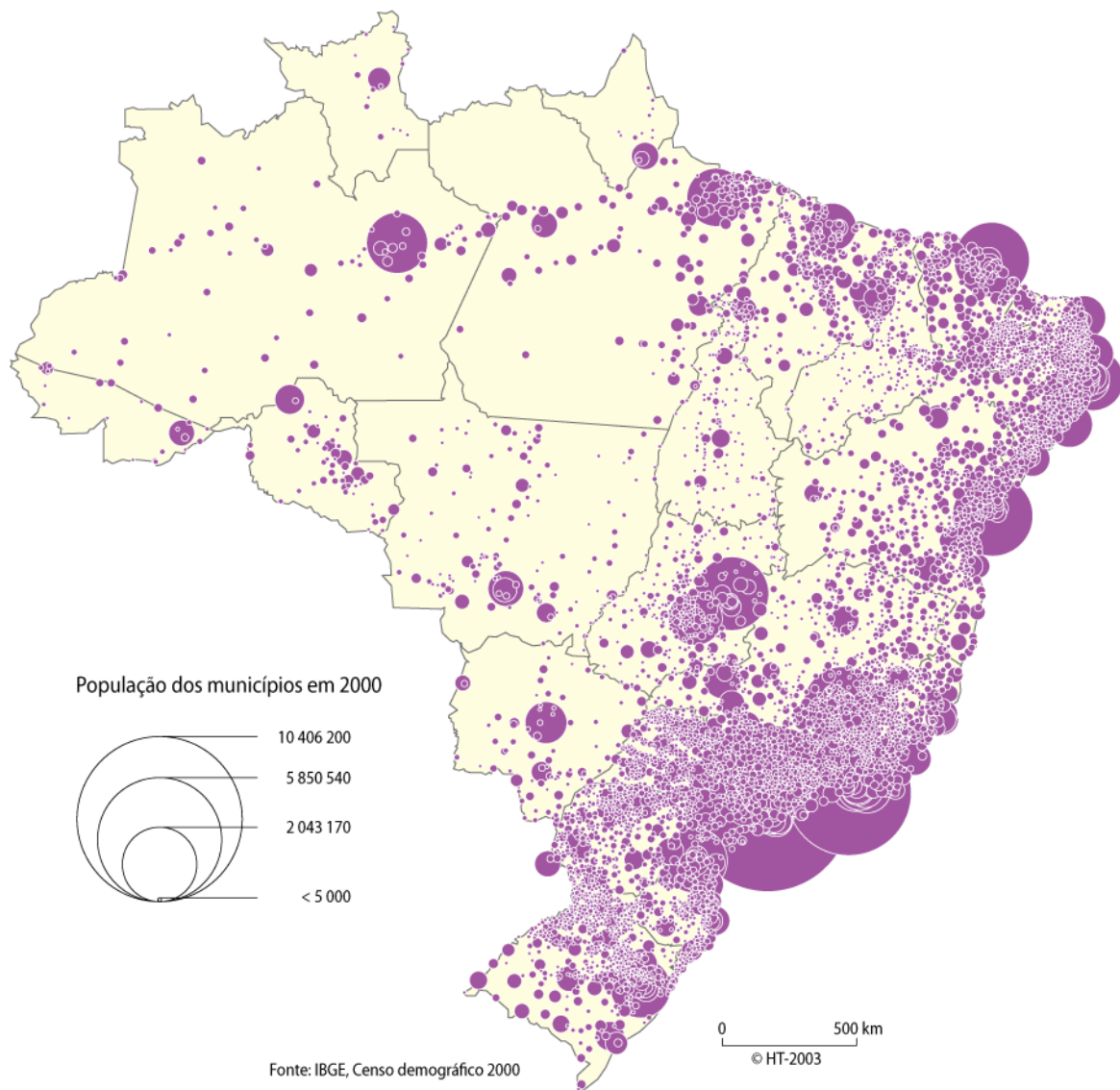


*Population density. Note the high density on the Southeast and along the coast, and a demographic empty on the North and part of the Center-West. Archela e Théry, used under a Creative Commons License.*

Almost all the largest cities are situated somewhere along or near the coast, the main exceptions being Brasília (the Capital, in the center of the country) and Manaus, an industrial pole in the Amazon region. Usually the capitals are the largest city in the State, but exceptions occur.

The current urban population corresponds to 84.4% of the total, and this is the result of a massive migration to urban areas in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. However, Brazil is still a “**small town**” country. Out of the 5,565 municipalities, only 283 present more than 100,000 inhabitants (totaling about 105 million people), while the other 5,282 municipalities represents the other 85 million out of the 191 million total, according to the 2010 census.

## Distribuição da população em 2000



*Population distribution. Note the high concentration of cities along the coast, with fewer to the interior. The big circle in the middle of the map is Brasília, built to be in the geographic center of the country. Archela e Théry, used under a Creative Commons License.*

### 6.3. Immigration and Emigration

Brazil, as other countries in the New World, received waves of immigrants from the entire globe. First, the Portuguese colonizers, and soon after waves of black slaves brought from Africa (Brazil received almost 40% of the black slave trafficking from Africa to the Americas) added to the indigenous peoples.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, millions of European immigrants from many countries arrived, mainly from Italy, Germany, Poland, Portugal and Spain, but also from other countries. Brazil is the 3<sup>rd</sup> country in the Americas to receive the most European Immigrants (behind the United States and Argentina). Later,



at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Japanese, Syrians and Lebanese, along with other eastern peoples arrived in great numbers. Brazil presents the largest Japanese and Italian communities outside their respective countries.

Nowadays, **immigration** to Brazil has no significant impact in the population growth and immigrants respond to only 0.3% of the population. Recently, the government has created programs to attract qualified work force to the country, to attend areas with lack of professionals. However, Brazil is still the destination of immigrants from other South American countries, and more recently received significant quantities of Haitians.

On the other hand, **emigration** presents significant numbers, and was higher during the economic crisis of the 1980s. According to a census of 2011 from the Foreign Relations Ministry, more than 3 million Brazilians are living abroad, mainly in Europe (almost 1 million) and North America (almost 1.5 million). Significant Brazilian communities abroad are in New York, Boston and Miami (United States), Toronto (Canada), Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom.

## 6.4. Migrations

Internal population movements were very significant during the last decades and played an important role in shaping the current regional demographics. In the 1950s and 1960s, droughts in the Northeast associated with the rural exodus and industrialization of the Southeast brought waves of people from the North and Northeast to the Southeast, mainly to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and also to the newly created capital, Brasília. In the 1980s, people from Northeast also began to migrate to the North, where settlement and development were being encouraged by the government. From the 1990s and on those flows continued but less intensely, while people from South began to flow into the Center-West to develop the agribusiness. With current government welfare programs the flow of migrants from poor regions has decreased significantly.



*Migrations movements from 1990 onwards, today less intense than in the last decades. From Wikimedia Commons, used under a Creative Commons License.*

## 6.5. Ethnic groups and interbreeding

Ethnic groups and ethnic relations in Brazil are very complex subjects, and sometimes controversial. This section intends to provide only an overview, while avoiding sensitive topics.

If there is a word that defines ethnic relations in Brazil it is **interbreeding** (the term **miscegenation** is more commonly used in Brazil, without any prejudice associated). As soon as Portuguese settlement began, white men and natives mixed, and soon after blacks were brought in as slaves they added to the mixture (to know more about slavery in Brazil, see the History section). Soon the interbred people began to mix between themselves and after some generations the population turned into a racial “melting pot”. Later, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, waves of European immigrants, along with Japanese, Chinese, Koreans and Arabs added to the mix.

Currently the ethnic groups of Brazil according to the 2010 census are as follows. Keep in mind that those ratios vary significantly according to the region.

White = 47.3%

Pardo = 43.1%

Black = 7.6%

Asian = 2.1%

Native American = 0.3%

Ethnicity is self determined to the census, which means that a white person, for example, can declare to be black to the census and count as a black person, if they want to. This explains some variations between surveys, even more considering that many people are somewhere in between.

Some common racial mixes are named:

White + black = *mulato*

White + native american = *caboclo* or *mameluco*

Native American + black = *cafuzo*

However, after generations of racial mixing there was no term appropriate to designate someone not clearly belonging to a specific ethnic group. The census began to offer people the term “**pardo**” to designate all variants of the above mixes and encompasses skin colors of various shades of brown.

## Racial Prejudice

It’s relevant to note that there was never segregation in Brazil, at least in the terms known from countries like the United States or South Africa; there were never churches, schools, neighborhoods and so on only for black or white people; and no law ever existed in that sense. In fact, such a law would be impractical, since a significant part of the population was and is somewhere in between ethnic groups. The Brazilian troops that fought in Europe during World War II were the only non segregated fighting force of this theater of the war.

Now, after reading the last paragraph, you would be saying to yourself: This is great, so there is no racial prejudice in the country! Then I would have to say: Absolutely not! Racial prejudice always

existed, but in a softer form than in most other countries. Blacks were excluded from most power positions, including ascending to officers in the armed forces and other government positions. The fact that most of the poor population was black or pardo didn't help either to fight racial superiority theories. Nonetheless, pardos had access to higher social positions if they had money or talent. A good example is the writer *Machado de Assis* (1839-1908), a poor half black boy, considered the greater Brazilian writer, founder of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and Ministry in the time of the Empire, while slavery was still on.

This more harmonious racial relationship is the basis of the “**racial democracy**” theory, which appeared in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. By this theory, racial relations in Brazil were fair and ethnicity was not a relevant trait in social relations, which implied that Brazil escaped racism as seen in other countries and that would represent a true democracy. This is in fact not true; racism still exists, but wears a softer mask than in most other countries.

An interesting example is the “**whitenization**” campaign promoted by the government during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The idea was to increase the white population and decrease the black population by promoting waves of immigration from Europe, that would eventually mix with the local black population and in a few generations would create a white population. The interesting point is that it used the premise that the populations would eventually interbreed, in a clear demonstration that interbreeding was not only common, but expected.



*The “Redemption of Ham” by Modesto Brocos (1852-1936), 1895 (Ham is one of the sons of Noah in the biblical story). This work shows a black grandmother, a mulatto daughter and white husband and baby. At each generation the family becomes “whiter” through interbreeding. Under Public Domain.*

Recently the government passed harsh laws to fight racism and promoted quotas for blacks and pardos in the public universities, although this last one has been controversial, since race is self determined and this policy excludes poor whites.

## **Native Americans**

During the time of colonization and early settlement some native peoples were partially assimilated in the European colony society and they also mixed. Meanwhile, others suffered with slavery and diseases brought in by the Europeans. All this is typically what happened in the rest of Latin America, with disastrous effects on the Native American societies and culture.

However, large portions of the interior remained largely unexplored by Europeans (and later Brazilians), especially in the Amazon region. Efforts to explore and settle the region began at the end



of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but only in the 1940s and on the government organized expeditions to contact the natives. Of those expeditions the ones of the three Villas-Bôas brothers are the most famous; they also contributed to the creation of important policies for Native American peoples that ultimately led to the creation of **FUNAI** (*Fundação Nacional do Índio*), the government organization in charge of Native Americans issues.

Even as late as in the 1970s tribes that were never contacted by “white men” were being contacted and studied; some encounters have been filmed, and it is very interesting to see such a first encounter and the tension that comes with it. The fact that illegal miners and lumberjacks explored the Amazon forest much earlier than the government, and usually acted with violence against the native peoples did not help much later contacts, and many peoples moved further to the interior to escape invaders.

FUNAI counts 67 **uncontacted tribes** in Brazil, mostly in the Amazon region, what puts Brazil in the first position of countries with most uncontacted tribes (Papua New Guinea in a close second). Those tribes have been identified by aerial observation or by neighboring contacted tribes. As strange as it sounds, there are still people in the world that had never had contact with the “outside” world, although they probably know that it exists, and are still living as in “pre-history”.



*Uncontacted natives in the State of Acre, observed from an aerial vehicle. I wonder what they are thinking about the aerial vehicle. By FUNAI.*

Currently native peoples count with Indigenous Territories (for more information, see topic 5.5), that are defined with the help of FUNAI. However, conflicts with miners and lumberjacks are still a reality and come with a great toll of lives. Conflicts with workers of government projects (like roads and dams) sometimes still happen. Nowadays the main source of disputes is related to the construction of

hydroelectric dams, which usually involves the flooding of some areas or changes in the flow of rivers. The slow pace of territories demarcation is another source of discontent.

## 6.6. Religions

Brazil has been historically a predominately **Roman Catholic** country, since the country has been colonized by the Portuguese, which are strongly Roman Catholics. However, since the time of the colony, Brazilian Roman Catholicism saw a high degree of **syncretism** (merging and combining of seemingly contradictory beliefs) with African and Native American (mostly animists) traditions, all under the umbrella of the Roman Catholic Church. Later, syncretism has been seen with Spiritism and Roman Catholicism.

Since 1891 Brazil has no longer an official religion, the state is secular and freedom of religion is granted by the Constitution, although the Roman Catholic Church still possesses a political influence, albeit smaller than in the recent past.

The current distribution of beliefs in Brazil is as follows according to the 2010 census. But keep in mind that significant variations occur in the regions:

Roman Catholicism: 64.6%

Protestantism: 22.2%

No religion: 8%

Spiritism: 2%

Other religions: 3.2%

The past few decades saw a significant decrease of Roman Catholics and a rapid expansion of Pentecostal Protestants (*Evangélicos*), along with people with no religion affiliation.

In general, religion relations in Brazil have been harmonious and characterized by a high degree of mobility (people changing religion).

## 6.7. Income and Wealth Distribution

This section is included because the income and wealth distribution in Brazil is one of the worst in the world, and it is very important to understand the social struggles and conflicts from past and present. According to the **Gini Index** (a measure of inequality) for **income inequality** from the World Bank (2012), from all countries studied Brazil is the **13<sup>th</sup>** with most income inequality (54.7%, where 100% is when 1 person owns all the income in the country and 0% means total equality), whereas Denmark is the best one with 24.7% and Seychelles is the worst one with 65.8%. Meanwhile, according to the Global Wealth Databook 2013 by the Credit Suisse Research Institute, Brazil has a Gini Index for **wealth distribution inequality** of 82.1% (where 100% is when 1 person owns all the wealth in the country and 0% means total equality).



*A scene not uncommon in cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. An affluent residential condominium featuring individual and collective pools and tennis courts separated by a wall from a low income neighborhood. Author undetermined.*

In the 2000s decade, economic development and government social programs were able to decrease a little the income inequality, although there is much more to do. This inequality hampers the economic development and drives the sprawling of slums (*favelas*), violence and criminality. It also creates an uneasy social environment, where millions are excluded from the economy. Social movements play an important role on the political and social scenarios, although its methods are often very controversial.

## 6.8. Languages

The official language of Brazil is **Portuguese** (and not Spanish as many think). The country is surrounded by Spanish-speaking countries (except for the Suriname and Guyanas) and this constituted as a unifying factor, along with others, that prevented the country from partitioning in smaller ones after the independence, just like happened to the Spanish Vice-Royalties in South and Central Americas.

It's very common for Brazilians to not understand Portuguese speaking Portuguese, and vice versa. Computer software and movie subtitles offer the options of Brazilian Portuguese and Portuguese Portuguese, as strange as it may sound.

Another differing factor is that the Brazilian Portuguese incorporated many words from the **Native Americans** (usually Tupi-Guarani) and from the **Africans** brought as slaves (usually speakers of Buntu). Today those words are in everyday use and most Brazilians haven't a clue that they are not really Portuguese vocabulary.

Another source of vocabulary is the **French**, with words adapted to Portuguese like "*abat-jour*" that becomes "*abajur*" (lampshade), "*toilet*" that turns into "*toalete*" (restroom), or "*soutien*" that becomes "*sutiã*", not counting words that are used in the original form. More recently, many words related to technology were adapted from **English** and entered officially in the dictionary, like "to

delete” adapted as the verb “*deletar*”, “to scan” into “*escanear*”, “to click” into “*clicar*”, in addition to many other words that were adapted. Also, expressions in English are commonly used in everyday life, especially in the corporate world.

Although the written language is the same all over the country, there are variations in the accent and some vocabulary throughout the regions and today are counted **15 dialects** of Portuguese in Brazil, although everyone can understand each other.

The Brazilian Native Americans speak about 274 different languages, what puts Brazil high in the list of countries with the most languages.

There are also some parts of the country in which other languages are predominant, mostly regions with European immigrants communities (mainly Italian, German and Polish), especially in the South (but also elsewhere), and in the North with Native American communities.

The majority of Brazilians speak only Portuguese, although English learning is becoming more widespread. In big cities it’s not so difficult to find someone who can speak English, but don’t count on it when going to the countryside. Other languages that are sought for learning are Spanish (since most neighboring countries speak that one), French, German, and due to the large immigrant communities, Italian and Japanese.

## **Portuguese**

Portuguese is the **5<sup>th</sup> language** with the most native speakers (with about 275 million people). It’s the language of Portugal, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and other smaller places on Earth. But don’t get confused. Although it has been put some effort in keeping the written language as close as possible in all those places, the pronunciation and the way to form sentences may vary greatly.

Portuguese is a Latin language, with a high degree of similarity with Spanish and Italian. So if you know other Latin languages, like Spanish, Italian or even French, learning a bit of Portuguese would come more easily. You’ll also notice that some accents are used over some vowels, like in Á, É, Ú, À, Ã, Õ, Â, Ê, Ô, and there is also the “Ç”, that sounds like a double “s”.

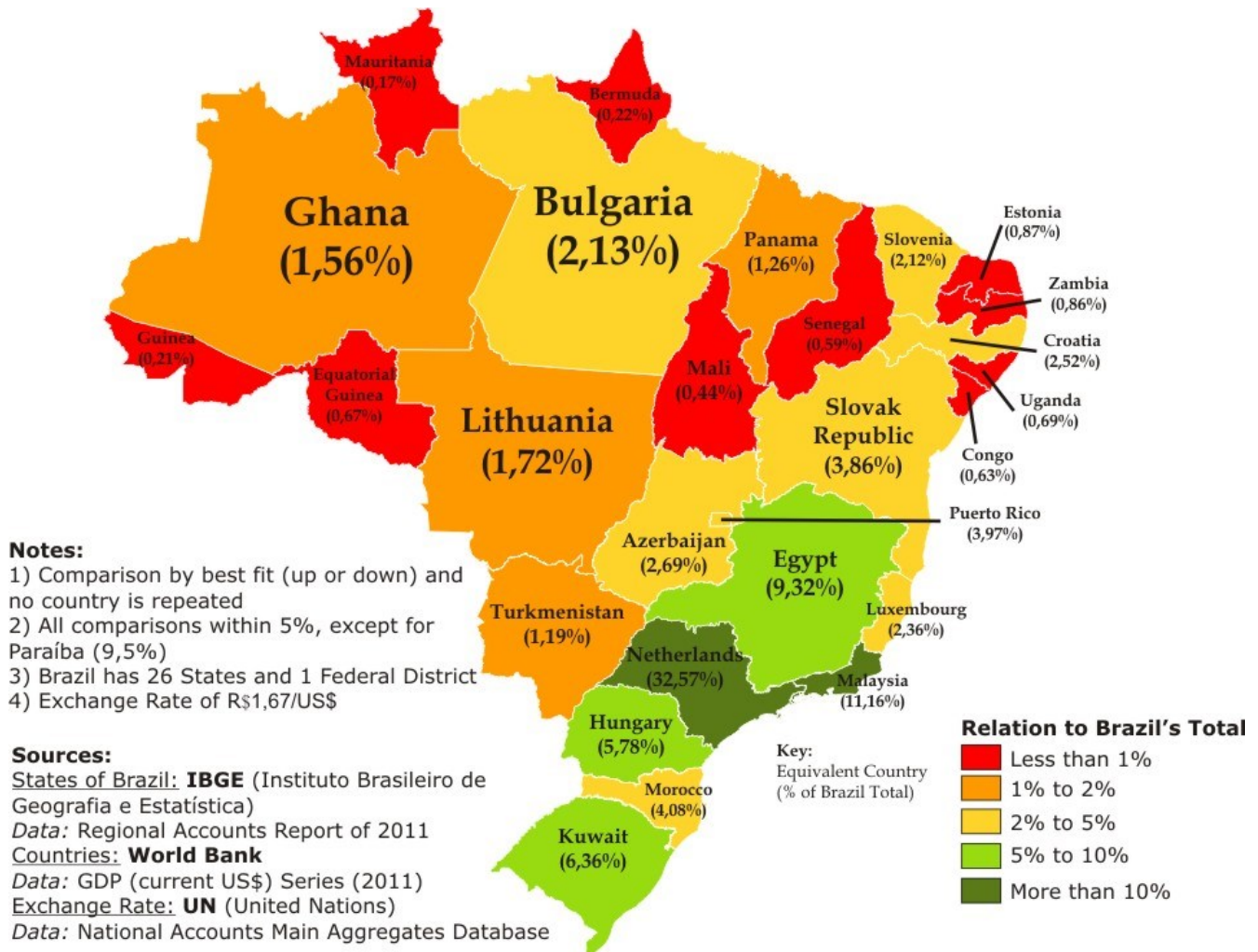
If you’re going to spend some time in Brazil learning a little bit of the language is highly recommended. Just the effort to communicate in Portuguese will create a sympathetic approach towards you. Every Brazilian is capable of understanding some Spanish even if never studied, so it can be used when necessary. But keep in mind that most Brazilians are not able to speak English, especially outside of the main urban areas, so don’t count on it (this doesn’t apply to tourist attractions and areas dedicated to tourism, of course).



## 7. Economy

Brazil's economy is the **2<sup>nd</sup> largest in the Americas** (behind the United States) and the **7<sup>th</sup> in the World** (World Bank, 2012). It's currently identified as an emergent economy, part of the commonly called groups of emergent countries, the **BRICS** (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

However, the economy has a very uneven distribution between the States, more or less correlated to the population distribution. The State of São Paulo has a highly disproportionate chunk of the country's economy (32%) and the States of the South and Southeast together (7 States) account for more than 70% of the country's GDP. The following map shows a comparison between the States GDP and countries, along with the relation to the national's total.



*Brazil states GDP compared to countries with similar GDPs. The percentage and the colors indicate the relation of each state to the country's total. By the author.*

The economy is very diverse, with commodities (mainly agricultural, mining and oil) playing a major role in exports, and a strong service and industrial sectors. Abundant natural resources and workforce also plays an important role.

It is a **mixed economy** (a middle ground between a free market economy and a planned economy); this means that most of the productive sector is private, but the government run some state enterprises and has strong influence on the economy through fiscal and monetary policies.

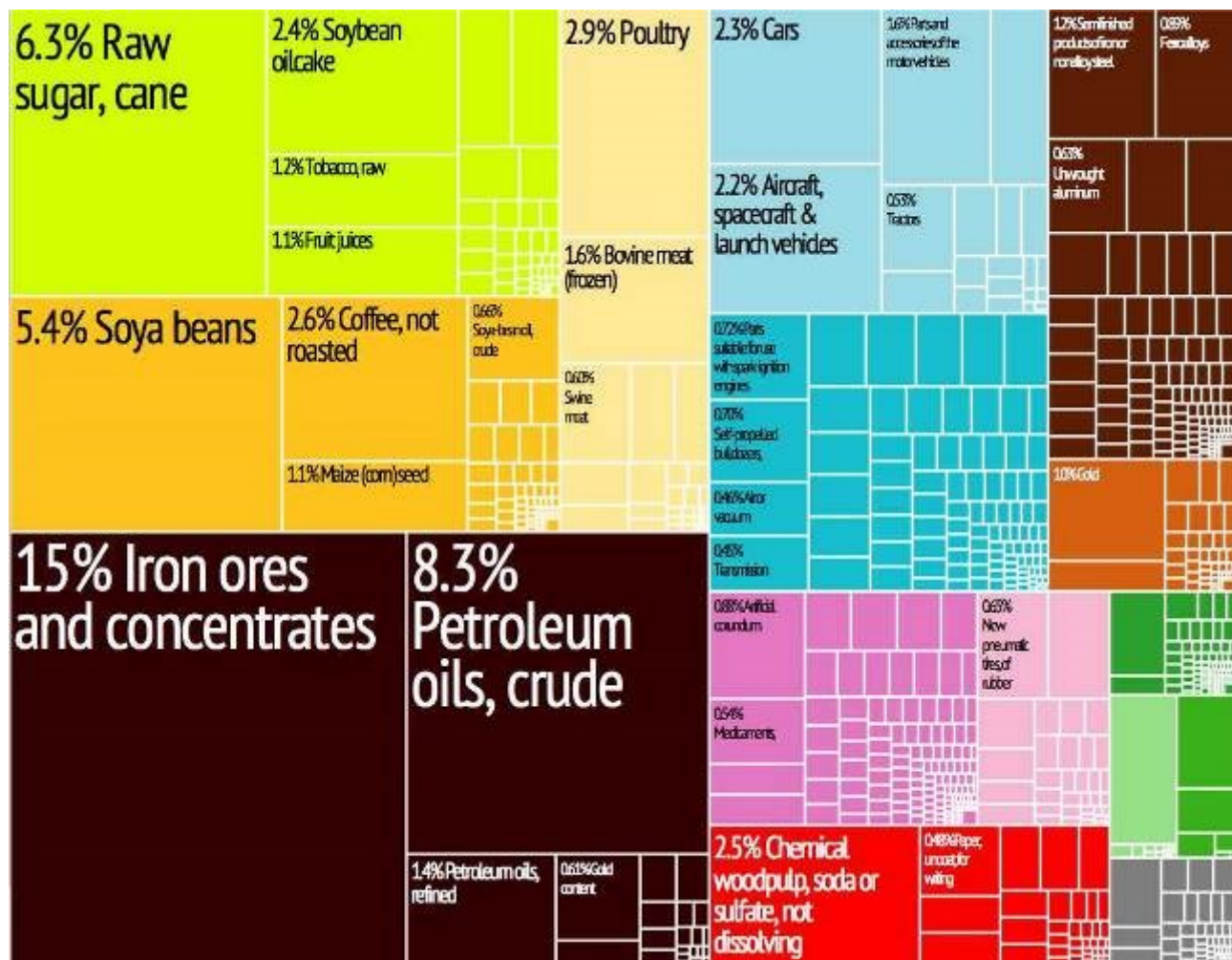
The largest company in Latin America, Petrobrás, is owned by the Brazilian State and some of the largest national private companies, like Vale (mining) and Embraer (aircraft manufacturing) were created and once owned by it. Among the largest Brazilian companies are banks, beverage producers, mining, steel and in the aerospace sector.

However, a series of issues hampers the economy and together they are known as “**Brazil Cost**”. They increase operational costs in Brazil, what consequently increases the cost of products and services decreasing their competitiveness. Among those issues are the lack of infrastructure, logistics difficulties, security costs, complex tributary laws, high taxes, high labour costs and a high level of corruption in the public sector, especially in local governments.

## 7.1. Imports/Exports

The major exports of Brazil are iron ore, steel, crude oil, soybeans, coffee, orange juice, ethanol, meat, footwear, textiles, automobiles and aircraft. The major imports are machinery, electrical and transport equipment, electronics, chemical products and automotive parts.

The trade balance has been kept mostly positive during the last decade, helped by the high commodities costs of the 2000s decade.



The main agricultural products are soybeans, orange juice, sugar cane (sugar and ethanol), corn, beef, chicken, pork and cellulose.

The main mineral products are iron ore, manganese, bauxite, among many others. Oil and gas are extracted from offshore platforms and from deep waters.

Exportation of commodities plays an important part on the country's exports.

### **7.3. Industry and Services**

The industry accounts for almost 30% of the GDP. It is diverse, but the most prominent sectors are automobiles, steel, petrochemicals, consumer durables, food, beverages, footwear and aircraft. There is a wide presence of multinational companies.

The service sector counts with a modern banking sector, insurance companies, education and healthcare services (since the ones provided by the state are mostly inadequate).

Companies and commodities are traded in the country's stock exchanges, which the São Paulo Stock Exchange (**Bovespa**) and the Mercantile and Futures Exchange (**BM&F**) are the most important ones.

### **7.4. Tourism**

The tourism in Brazil draws about **5 million foreigners a year** that adds to a strong domestic tourism and represents an important economic activity, especially for some regions dependent on it. The tourism has in its strongest points the natural attractions and welcoming culture, while it is hampered by poor transport infrastructure and public security.



*Iguazu Falls, a major Brazilian tourist attraction. By Reinhard Jahn, used under a Creative Commons License.*

The major tourist attractions and places in Brazil are:

- 1) The Amazon jungle and rivers, especially around Manaus;
- 2) The Northeast beaches;
- 3) The Pantanal and Central Plateau in the Center-West region;
- 4) Historical attractions in Minas Gerais;
- 5) The cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo;



- 6) The Iguazu Falls and Itaipu Dam at Foz do Iguazu;
- 7) Beaches and cities in the southern state of Santa Catarina;
- 8) The vineyards and wine producing region of the Rio Grande do Sul mountains;
- 9) The island of Fernando de Noronha.

There are many other tourist destinations, and most of them revolve around natural attractions.



*The Island of Fernando de Noronha, about 350 km off the coast, it is home of the Brazilian most beautiful beaches and an environment protection area. By Photo Pantai, used under a Creative Commons License.*

## **7.5. Informal Economy**

The informal economy has a significant role in the overall economy. Informal activities are those that are not registered by the government, do not collect taxes, do not issue fiscal notes, do not register its employees and so on. This economy goes hidden in the charts and numbers of the reports, although it is the source of income for many families. Of course illegal activities are technically informal, such as drug trafficking and arms dealing, but the focus here is with more conventional economic activities.

It's very common to find street sellers with stands (without permission), selling every kind of products, usually cheap gear and falsifications. Pirated movies and software are also very common (which are illegal, of course) and sold on the streets, beaches and other public areas, and are usually



called by the euphemism of “generic versions”. Those sellers are called “*ambulantes*” or “*camelôs*”. It’s needless to say that when buying from those street sellers you won’t get a receipt and neither a guarantee, although some accept returns and exchanges, a service that most “real stores” do not offer.

There are entire streets in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro which the sidewalks are crowded with stands selling those products. The police sometimes perform operations to apprehend those products, but in the next day there are always more, so this type of commerce is somewhat tolerated. The main source of cheap electronics and falsified products is Paraguay, both legally and smuggled; however, most of them are manufactured in China or somewhere else in eastern Asia.

But in addition to simple street sellers, the informal economy includes small companies, professional services by individuals and others. The main reasons for staying informal are the high State bureaucracy, high taxes and rigid working laws.

Don’t surprise yourself if when hiring a service someone asks if you want to know the price with or without a fiscal note (which means, with or without paying taxes). Unfortunately it is also not uncommon when getting receipts in restaurants or elsewhere to be asked how much you want to register; since many people get reimbursed by their employers when working outside, some people may ask for higher values in the receipts.

## 7.6. Economic issues and effects on everyday life

To understand the general Brazilian mindset on economic issues you must understand the recent economic crisis and effects that marked an entire generation. In the 1970s Brazil lived a time of rapid economic growth under the military dictatorship government. However, in the 1980s (called “the lost decade”) an economic crisis ensued, coupled with political instability caused by the return to democracy and the related civil society struggles.

At the end of the decade **hyperinflation** was a severe problem. People received their wages and went to the supermarket all at the same day, causing huge lines and shortage of products. The banking system created investments to apply the money on overnight rates, because letting the money uninvested for one day would decrease its purchase power. Often the government had to decree the cut of 3 zeros on the prices, otherwise they would run in the “millions” to buy a single product (at least everyone could boast to be a millionaire or billionaire).

To fight the inflation the government launched a series of disastrous economic plans, that usually included frozen prices and government control. The most impacting was the one that confiscated the saving accounts of everybody and left only a limit available for withdrawal in the hopes that without access to money in banks, people would buy less and inflation would decrease. It only did not work, as people lost confidence in financial institutions and the government, and still today at the slightest hint of the government proclaiming something similar (which is very improbable) people get nervous.

It was only with the **Real Plan** in 1993, and the introduction of the Real currency in 1994, that economic stability ensued. However, the collateral effect was very **high base interest rates** (up to 40% a year in the beginning, around 10% a year now, one of the highest in the world), what jeopardize investments in productive enterprises, although attracts foreign money at the expense of public debt. Still today the return of hyperinflation is feared and its control is one of the highest priorities of any government that wants to be reelected.

This entire story caused some peculiarities: preference to invest in real state and other “real” assets; suspicion about financial institutions and government decisions; a conservative attitude from entrepreneurs and investors, what proved to be a good thing in the last economic crisis of 2008. And at the end, all Brazilians now understand something about economy.

## 8. Politics and Government

Brazil is a **federal presidential representative democratic republic**, with a **multi-party** system (with an emphasis on “multi”: there are currently 32 active parties and more on the go).

The largest parties in terms of affiliated people are PMDB, PT, PP, PSDB and PDT, but most of the parties are small. In terms of political orientation, most of the parties fall somewhere between left and center, but there are parties covering almost the entire spectrum, from extreme left to right, and from authoritarian to libertarian.

Unions are usually affiliated with parties and exert pressure on the government. Social movements also play an important role in politics, being the Landless Workers’ Movement (MST) one of the oldest and most active.



*The Ministries Esplanade in Brasília, the Federal Government nervous center, featuring the National Congress at the back. By Mario Roberto Durán Ortiz, in Public Domain.*

Politics in Brazil are still plagued by old systems and vices that are slowly fading away (hopefully) while democracy gains maturity and the population gets more educated. The most common are *cronyism*, *patrimonialism*, *nepotism*, *clientelism*, *trading in influence and patronage*. The *coronelismo* (the rule of the colonels) is a typical Brazilian regional oligarchy structure that is still present (although decreasing in importance), especially in agrarian regions of the North and Northeast, which is most notable by the political hegemony of some wealthy families in particular States.

However, the democratic system requires large sums of money to be spent on elections (and even buying votes), and politicians are used to deviate large sums of money from public services and

infrastructure projects to sponsor their next election. Everything is carried out with the help of companies, suppliers and public servants that get their share as well. This practice is widespread in all levels of government and is one of the key reasons for the country's underdevelopment and poor infrastructure. So there is no surprise in the constant news of corruption scandals, so frequent that the population's reaction is usually just a shrug of resignation. Unfortunately laws protecting politicians and the slow judiciary system results in usual impunity, although some recent cases resulted in high ranking politicians being sent to jail, a first in Brazil.

A high level of bureaucracy is also a mark of the political system and the government administration. The draconian bureaucracy is usually pointed out as a deterrent to economic growth and unfriendly to businesses.

The administration is divided into federal, state and municipal levels. For more about administrative organization and the three powers, see the section 4, "Administrative Divisions and Organization".

## **Democracy**

Democracy was peacefully reinstated in 1985 after 21 years of military dictatorship, when civil rights and political freedom were restricted, although allowed the vote for some offices. In fact, only during 64 years in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century democracy was officially in place (1901-1930, 1945-1964, 1985-2000), although the political system of the Old Republic (1889-1930) could not be qualified as really a democracy and was more nominal than real. The National Congress has mostly been kept open during this period (with short periods of transition) and remains an important link between local politics and the Federal Government. But after almost 30 years of reinstated democracy, how well it is going in Brazil?

The British magazine *The Economist* publishes an annual report on the state of democracy worldwide, called the *Democracy Index*. Its results are very interesting to evaluate the current state of democracy in Brazil. The Democracy Index report of 2012 shows Brazil in the 44<sup>th</sup> place (the same as Poland) with an overall score of **7.12** (from a scale of 0 to 10). This survey classifies countries in 4 categories according to their score:

1. **Full democracies**--scores of 8-10
2. **Flawed democracies**--score of 6 to 7.9
3. **Hybrid regimes**--scores of 4 to 5.9
4. **Authoritarian regimes**--scores below 4

Thus, with a score of 7.12 Brazil is considered a "Flawed Democracy". But this overall score doesn't tell the whole story. As with many aspects of the country disparities are present. This overall score is an average of 5 categories analyzed, of which Brazil got the following scores:

1. **Electoral process and pluralism** (free and fair elections between competing parties): **9.58**
2. **Civil liberties** (protection of basic human rights): **9.12**
3. **Functioning of government** (how democratic decisions are effectively implemented): **7.50**
4. **Political participation** (the active and free participation of citizens in public life): **5.00**
5. **Political culture** (the democratic culture of the citizens, with no passivity or apathy): **4.38**

On the categories 1 and 2, Brazil scores very high, comparable to top full democracies like Switzerland or Netherlands. The number 3 scores lower, but still comparable to the United States, ranked 21<sup>st</sup> and that had the same score on this category. The categories 4 and 5 scored low and are comparable to many countries with authoritarian and hybrid regimes.

The interesting point to note is that the higher scores are more dependent on the government, institutions and laws, while the lower scores are dependent on the civil society. This scenario is common on other Latin America countries, probably because decades of authoritarian regimes followed by a newly founded democratic system didn't allowed enough time for a change on political culture, and apathy and obedience are still strong traits. This will probably take some decades and generations of democratic stability to change.

Nevertheless, this survey confirms what can be perceived on society: that Brazilians need to learn and take part more actively on the democratic process, and this, in turn, should allow such participation.

## **8.1. Elections**

Elections are held every 2 years, interspacing municipal elections and state and federal elections. So the candidates voted in each election are:

**Election A:** Mayor, *Vereadores*

**Election B:** President, Senator, Federal Deputy, Governor, State Deputy

It's interesting to note that there are 3 Senators for each state, with 8 years mandates. So in an "Election B", 2 senators are elected, and in the following one just 1 Senator, and repeat.

The whole process is under the organization of a specialized branch of the Judiciary called the Electoral Justice. Elections are held at the first Sunday of October, from 8 a.m. to 17 p.m.

Selecting the winner for executive offices is simple: the one with more votes win. In the case of the President, Governors and Mayors of cities with more electors than a determined threshold, if no candidate achieved more than 50% of the valid votes a second round is performed 2 weeks later with the 2 most voted candidates. The Legislative winners are somewhat more complex to define, since the amount of votes each party receives is what defines the final share of the available chairs, and not only the total votes received by each candidate.

The vote is compulsory in Brazil and failing to vote and justify it to the Electoral Justice causes you to be "non compliant", what prevents you from getting a passport, assuming a government job, enrolling in a public university, and so on. However, the vote being compulsory does not translate in high rates of attendance. Usually 20% of voters don't vote on each election. If you're out of town and cannot reach your voting place at the election day you can go to any voting place and justify your absence, what is a really easy procedure. If don't take any action during or just after the election you'll have to go to the Electoral Justice and regularize your situation, which usually involves the payment of a very small fine. So, at the end, the vote is not actually "compulsory".

For this same reason the voting organization must reach the most remote places, including Native American tribes living in a 3 days boat trip distance on the Amazon and other very isolated communities. All this requires a tremendous organization and hierarchical structure.

The voting locations are usually schools but other buildings may be used. Each building or place is called a Zone, and each room or division is called a Section, which holds a ballot each. To every voter is assigned a Zone and a Section; you cannot vote if can't reach this place, like during a trip.



The people working on the Sections are volunteers or called in by the government. Since the number of volunteers is much smaller than needed the Electoral Justice sends to people a letter some months before informing that they have been selected to work during the elections. Unless you have a very good excuse to not attend the presence is compulsory; but it's not all bad, since working in the elections gives you the right to take 2 days off of your job (what isn't an advantage if you are not an employee). If you have been selected once, you'll certainly be in the "democracy workers" roll for at least some more elections.

Each Section features 4 to 5 people, depending on the election and State. One of them is the Section President which receives a special training and is the ultimate responsible for the Section's ballot up to the end of the voting time.

Each candidate receives a number, which is inserted in the machine during the voting. Each party has a fixed 2 digit number. The number of digits varies according to the office (2 digits for president, governors, senators and mayors, which are the same as their party's, and 4 or 5 for the rest, being the first 2 numbers the party's). Since the ballot is an electronic voting machine, the election results are usually known by midnight with almost all votes counted.

## **9. International Relations**

The international relations of Brazil have been historically of peace and consensus. Border disputes with neighbors were solved through diplomacy and the only regional wars occurred a long time ago, being the Paraguayan War from 1864-1870 and the Platine Wars, intermittently from 1825 to 1865 in 3 armed conflicts (that ultimately led to the creation of Uruguay).

Today there are no significant border disputes or animosity with its neighbors as happens between other South American nations. Currently the most prominent territorial discussions include the limits over oceanic borders and the Antarctic region, on which Brazil maintains a scientific station. Worldwide, Brazilians are usually well received and there is no animosity towards the country.

Brazil has participated in the creation of many international organizations, including the late League of Nations, the UN (United Nations) and related Organizations, and regional ones like the OAS (Organization of American States), UNASUL (Union of South American Nations) and Mercosul (South Common Market), among others.

The current policy is to establish itself as a regional power, leader in Latin America and of the emergent countries (including the BRICS), seeking consensus, solving disputes thorough diplomacy and being against intervention on internal affairs of other countries. Other goals include establish a social and economic integration with Latin American nations and seek a permanent chair at the UN Security Council. The country is currently the leader of the UN Peacekeeping mission in Haiti, called MINUSTAH.

## 10. Laws

The intention of this section is to give the reader an overview of the most important set of laws that affect the everyday life of the country. Of course it is not the intention to go over law theory or to explain that to kill someone, to steal or to drive drunk are crimes, since this is pretty much common sense elsewhere in the world.

First of all you should know that the justice system in Brazil is very slow. Some processes may take eight or more years to conclude, and if the government should pay you something than you will probably need to wait more. This is caused mainly by the very bureaucratic nature of the legal process that allows many appeals, added to the lack of a suitable structure of the Judiciary.

You also should know that there are special sets of laws to protect the environment, the children, the elderly, the women, the Native Americans and also against racism. Crimes covered by those laws are treated very severely.

The current Constitution of Brazil has been issued in 1988. It is very recent, but already underwent many “amendments”. This constitution introduced the “welfare state”, a state in which the government provides education, healthcare and other services to all the population, in the molds of the ones currently existing in Europe. This introduction caused a steady rise in taxes, which the government is struggling to convert in better social services.

### 10.1. Working Laws

The laws regulating the relationship between employees and employers are divided between public sector and private sector laws.

#### **CLT (*Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho*)**

The “Consolidation of the Working Laws” or **CLT** is a set of laws issued in 1943 by Getúlio Vargas and was very important to protect the workers during the early industrialization period. It is still used today to define the relations between employers and employees, although there are pressures to flexibilize it in order to adapt to the current job market reality. It is applicable to everyone that is hired in the private sector, excluding the ones working as “autonomous” or as an “independent company”.

This law covers many aspects, including safety conditions, work of minors, relations with unions, minimum wage and so on. The most important aspects you should know are that workers have the right to:

- 1) 30 consecutive days of paid vacation a year, redeemable after the first year in the same employment. This can be taken in 30 days straight, 20 and 10 days parcels, or only 20 days and trade the last 10 for money.
- 2) In case of mothers, 4 months of paid license after the birth.
- 3) A 13<sup>th</sup> salary in December. This is not actually a benefit, since the wages are paid monthly, and at the end of the year you would not have received a 1 month worth of wage if paid weekly, since each month presents 4 weeks plus some days.
- 4) 11 hours of resting time between working journeys.
- 5) Paid extra time, with added value depending on the day and time.

6) In case of dismissal, 30 days of early warning ("*aviso prévio*"), so the worker can look for a new job; otherwise, the employer must pay the equivalent of those 30 days.

7) The employer must provide a meal for journeys over 6 hours and transportation to and from the workplace, or provide the monetary compensation for them.

There is also the contribution to the **FGTS** (*Fundo de Garantia do Tempo de Serviço*). This is a fund administered by the government in which the employer makes a monthly contribution in the name of the employee equivalent to a certain percentage of the paid salary. This fund is used by the government to finance housing purchases at more affordable rates and in infrastructure investments.

Its main purpose is to offer a "compulsory saving account" that can be used by the worker after being fired, so he can support himself until finding a new job. This money is "untouchable" by the employee, and can be redeemed only in the case of being fired (quitting your job does not count) or using it to finance a house, that must be the only real estate owned by the worker. This money yield awful rates, which sometimes does not even compensate the inflation, what may be a concern if you are in the same employment for a long time and have accumulated a substantial sum.

Every worker must have a "**Carteira de Trabalho**", that is basically a workers log where it is registered all the employments, salaries and other information related to the worker history. It is signed by the employer on each admission and demission. Because of that, the expression "*job of a signed log*" means to have a job properly registered and following the CLT laws, in opposition to a job in the informal market, which is still very common and workers don't have any benefits.

## Public employees

To work for the government in Brazil is a totally different story from the private sector. It does not follow the rules of the **CLT** but is instead regulated by specific laws (different laws applies for different branches of the government).

The admission of public employees is conducted through a test called "**concurso**". This is used for every level of government, from Senate employees to the military, policemen, teachers and doctors.

When new vacancies are opened those tests are organized and announced publically, and very strict rules are published. Every applicant must pay a fee. The test is usually hold on Sundays and is generally composed of a one day test on the subjects required by the job, but sometimes is composed by other steps such as physical tests in cases like police jobs, or extra points given for proved experience in that area.

The approved applicants are determined by their final grades only. There are no interviews. The approved candidates and their grades are published granting transparency for the whole process.

The public employee career and wages follow a strict path in which the employee progresses a step at every year. This career "plan" and the salaries on every step are public and can be consulted on the Internet (for all careers in the Federal Executive branch, consult [www.servidor.org.br](http://www.servidor.org.br)). The same is true for state and municipal employments.

Public jobs vary greatly in respect to salaries. Most careers offer very modest wages, while others offer very good ones, the latter resulting in much disputed "*concursos*". Some people even study for years just to pass on a "*concurso*".

So what is the big attraction on public jobs? It's the fact that you can't be fired, you have **stability**. It means that even if your salary is not the best you may be sure to always receive it, what is a very

attractive feature in times of economic uncertainty and with the increasingly volatile job market. Of course you can be fired if you do something very wrong and after going through an administrative process. This stability gives the public employees assurance that they will not be fired if refuses to do something wrong when asked by their bosses. On the other hand, if you plan to just coast to retirement doing little work you'll not have many problems, even though some of the careers have a part of the payment attached to performance evaluations.

## 10.2. Consumer Law

The **CDC** (*Código de Defesa do Consumidor*) is a set of laws to protect the consumer and to regulate the relations between the seller and the consumer. It was issued in 1990 and since then had an important effect in the society. Today it is compulsory to have a copy of that law available on every commercial establishment.

If there is a persistent disagreement the consumer may seek the advice and help of the **Procon** (*Programa de Proteção e Defesa do Consumidor*), a foundation by the government that is present nationwide. This foundation invites both parties and tries to reach an agreement (what they usually do) avoiding the case to go to the already jammed judiciary, what means a lengthy and costly process.

## 10.3. Welfare

### Retirement

Every private sector worker should also contribute to the **INSS** (*Instituto Nacional de Seguro Social*), which is the government welfare organization that provides workers with “social safety nets”, like an unemployment insurance that grants a 3 month “salary” capped to a determined amount or to complement your pay in case of long absences due to health problems. It is also the responsible for the retirements of all Brazilians in the private sector. The **INSS** grants a lifelong retirement wage that is proportional to the contributions, but which maximum amount caps at a somewhat low level. Because of this many Brazilians also contribute to some kind of private retirement fund.

For government employees the retirement does not depend on the **INSS** as for private sector workers. At the end the public employees contribute proportionally more of their salary to this public employee's retirement fund, but used to receive a higher pay when retired. Until some time ago retirees from the public service received full salaries for life, but of course this system is not sustainable in an increased life expectancy scenario, so the new ones will receive a smaller portion of their full salaries. Recently a new rule has been passed and the ones admitted after that will receive a maximum retirement wage similar to those in the private sector; there is no change in the rules for the ones admitted before that law. The government incur in enormous costs to finance the public service retirements fund.

Brazilians age of retirement depends on several factors, including time of contribution to the retirement fund, gender, if a rural or urban worker, and so on.

### Social Programs

The biggest government social program (but not the only one) is the “**Bolsa Família**”, a financial aid for families with very low income per capita, paid every month and capped to a maximum amount that is somewhat low, so families won't stop looking for jobs. The program is conditional, since to keep the aid the family children must attend school at a determined level of attendance and failing to



comply repeatedly will result in the forfeit of the payments. The goal of the program is to keep children in school while helping the families to get a better life condition.

There is no queue to enroll in the program; if the family fits the requirements they can be included immediately, without the intervention of “politics prone” entities. The register is preferably in the name of the mother, since it is considered that women would make a better use of the money for their children. The program covers millions of people nationwide, with proportionally more assisted people in the Northeast and North regions.

It is also controversial, and critics point out that the program may be used for political reasons and may increase idleness, since it would allow people to not seek jobs or a better condition of life, what ultimately would get them out of the poverty condition and from the program. On the other hand supporters of the program claim that this payment is too little for people to stop looking for a job and it works more like a complement of income, that for very poor people makes a difference in the life condition and nutrition of the children; it would also undermine the political dependence of very poor people to local politicians, thus weakening local oligarchies.

## 11. Military

The military forces in Brazil are divided into three branches: the **Army** ("*Exército Brasileiro*", EB), **Navy** ("*Marinha do Brasil*", MB) and the **Air Force** ("*Força Aérea Brasileira*", FAB). The Brazilian "**Marines**" are the "*Fuzileiros Navais*" and are embedded in the Navy. The Brazilian military forces are the largest in Latin America and the second largest in the American continent.

The most constant task of the armed forces is patrolling the borders, especially the very long land borders. These are shared with many South American countries and most of it is covered in dense jungle and are in remote and uninhabited areas. Those conditions makes for a permeable border prone to drug dealing, bootlegging and arms trafficking. Another problem is the constant threat of guerrillas of other countries using the Brazilian territory for maneuvers or to escape from their country's army, such as the ones in Colombia and Venezuela.

The armed forces also play a very important social role integrating the communities in isolated places, especially in the Amazon region, offering healthcare, communication and helping out in other needs. The armed forces are also used in the relief operations of natural disasters.

The military service in Brazil is compulsory and every male at the age 18 must enroll in the military service, known as "**Tiro de Guerra**". The vast majority of conscripts are dispensed of the military service because where they live there is no military facility, for excess of conscripts or for medical reasons. The selected ones must serve for 12 months, partial time, and there is no payment for that. The training consists of basic drills and weapons handling. The compliance with the military service is necessary to get a passport, admission on a public job or a public university, and others.

## 12. Public Security Organizations

The public security in Brazil is shared among some organizations.

### **Polícia Militar, PM (Military Police)**

The *Polícia Militar* is responsible for the ostensive surveillance of the streets, chasing and arresting criminals, emergency calls and many others types of operations. There are specialized units, like the ones operating helicopters and airplanes, canine, anti-rioting, state road patrolling and so on. They are the most common type of police you'll see on the streets. If you need them, call 190.

They are called military police because they are considered an ancillary and reserve force of the Brazilian Army and follows a military structure, with ranks and military discipline. They are under the command of each state government, so there are 27 forces in operation, one for each state and the Federal District.

### **Corpo de Bombeiros (Firemen)**

The *Corpo de Bombeiros* is responsible for fire fighting and prevention, civil defense, search and rescue and related activities. If you need them, call 193.

As with the military police, they are considered an ancillary and reserve force of the Brazilian Army, and follow a military structure, with ranks and military discipline. They are part of the Military Police organization. They are under the command of each state government.

### **Polícia Civil (Civil Police)**

The *Polícia Civil* is responsible for the judicial aspects of the police. When a criminal is arrested by the military police, he/she is handed over to the *Polícia Civil* for custody, register and prosecution. This police force has in its ranks deputies, investigators, inspectors and so on.

While the military police may answer to the emergency call and arrest the criminal, it is the Civil Police that investigates the crime scene as they have the scientific investigation specialists, or the Brazilian version of "CSI". They are under the command of each state government.

### **Guarda Civil Municipal, GCM (Municipal Civilian Guard)**

The *Guarda Civil Municipal* is a police force that may be created by municipalities, although they are usually only present in the larger cities. They help out the military police to patrol and protect the city, although with limited powers.

### **Departamento da Polícia Federal, DPF (Federal Police Department)**

The *Departamento da Polícia Federal*, more commonly known as just *Polícia Federal*, is the Brazilian equivalent to the United States FBI and is subordinated to the Ministry of Justice. They are responsible for investigating federal crimes and are often the responsible for corruption investigations that end up in the newspaper's front pages.

The PF is also responsible to be the maritime, airport, port and border police, and to fight drug trafficking and smuggling, among other types of crimes. They are also responsible for passport issuance and immigration control and every foreigner living in Brazil shall have some interaction with them at some point.

## **Polícia Rodoviária Federal, PRF (Federal Highway Police) and Polícia Ferroviária Federal, PFF (Federal Railroad Police)**

The *Polícia Rodoviária Federal* is the force responsible to patrol and combat crime in the federal highways. The *Polícia Ferroviária Federal* does the same at the railroads. They are subordinated to the Ministry of Justice.

## **Força Nacional de Segurança Pública, FNSP (Public Security National Force)**

The FNSP was created in 2004 and is used when governors request the federal assistance to contain acts against the order, including prison rioting and waves of urban violence. This force is better known for its elite unit, which can be rapidly deployed anywhere in the country.

## 13. Infra Structure

### 13.1. Education

The educational system in Brazil is divided in four levels:

**Pre-School** (*Pré-Escola*): from 0 to 5 years; not compulsory.

**Fundamental Education** (*Ensino Fundamental*): from 6 to 14 years, in 9 grades; compulsory.

**Middle Education** (*Ensino Médio*): from 15 to 17 years, 3 grades; regular or technical, not compulsory.

**Superior Education** (*Ensino Superior*): usually from 18 onwards, not compulsory.

All levels of education are offered free of charge by the government, although the Pre-School, Medium School and Superior School do not reach everyone or fulfill all the demand. The Fundamental School has a more complete coverage, with the government promoting efforts to keep children in school even on remote places. The responsibility by the educational system is divided between the federal, state and municipal governments.

However, the public education is usually (but not always) of poor quality, prone to violence and infrastructure problems, and with teachers with low wages. The exception is the Superior Education that is regarded as of good quality. This makes the middle class and up to seek private schools that offer a good quality education, but at the same time represent a big burden on the family budget (that added to other expenses due to poor public services, makes a sizeable hole at the end of the month).

The best colleges/universities (superior schools) are the public ones, maintained by the states or the federal government and are free of charge. However they don't even get near to fulfill all the demand. If you don't get into a public college you'll have to pay for a private one, which is usually very expensive and which quality varies wildly. So it's very common for people to work during the day and attend a private college class at night.

The standard mode of selection and entry for the colleges/universities is the **Vestibular**. Don't say that word near a late teen or he/she will begin to shiver. The *Vestibular* is a test (or set of tests) promoted once or twice a year by each or group of universities, in which the applicants enroll to a specific course. In a predetermined day (or days, usually a Sunday by the end of the year), they all go to predetermined test places scattered by many cities (depending on the area of coverage of the university) and they perform the test. Each student usually attends many tests during the year, especially in the last months. The approvals are determined solely based on the final grades (there is no interview or other stages, and the grades from the middle school are not considered).

The ratio of candidates by vacancies varies greatly by course and university, but it's usually in the order of 1 to some tenths. The medicine courses are famously the most disputed ones. It's not uncommon for young people to try for many years in a row to get into a public university. There are dedicated schools to prepare students for those tests and they are called "**Cursinhos**". The *Vestibular* is such an important event in the student's life that all the middle school (and even some of the fundamental) is totally focused on preparing the students for this test.

The logic of education in Brazil goes like that: if you can't afford a private school, you go to a public school with a poor education, which in turn will prevent you from going to a public university since the competition is very high (unless you're a genius). On the other hand, the logic to the parents who



pay for private schools is that their heirs will have a good education and with some effort will get into a public university, which is free, so you don't have to pay for the whole thing. If your child is lazy or not very adept of studying, then he won't get in and you'll have pay for a private university as well. To try to reverse this logic the government created quotas in the public universities for students egressed from the public educational system, allowing them to go to college even if their test grade are not as high as those of private schools students.

### 13.2. Healthcare

Healthcare in Brazil is provided free of charge by the government and is very comprehensive, even more than in many developed countries. The catch is that the service quality is usually (but not always) of poor quality, lacking enough infrastructure, doctors and materials, which leads to huge delays in attendance and treatments. The healthcare service is provided by the **SUS** (*Sistema Único de Saúde* or "Unified Healthcare System").

So if you want to assure a good (or at least better) healthcare you'll need to pay for a healthcare plan, which are extensively available and commonly offered as part of the benefits package of companies. You usually pay a monthly fee which varies according to your age and preexisting conditions. When you need some clinical consulting or procedure you can choose your doctor from a referenced chain of private doctors.

A common event in healthcare is the yearly campaigns of vaccinations focused on children. It is compulsory that each parent takes their children up to a certain age to take the vaccines, which are free of charge. Each child receives a vaccination "record log" ("*Carteira de Vacinação*") in which is recorded all the vaccines the child has taken and you can see which ones are missing. This policy has proved efficient and many diseases have been eradicated in the last decades. You also should know that vaccination is recommended when traveling to most areas in the north and central west.

The government also has programs to promote healthcare in poor and remote areas, which usually lack doctors even though the offered wages are higher on those places.

### 13.3. Housing

Housing styles varies a lot. In the cities security is a major concern, so there is a preference for houses or apartments condominiums. They are available from humble dwellings to luxury ones. If a house is not in a condominium it's called a "street house", since the gate of this home gives directly in the street. They're the most common type of housing despite being more vulnerable in terms of security, what is not much of a concern in smaller cities.

Another major characteristic in the cities is the high level of concentration of people, which leads to high density areas. This is triggered most by the fact that infrastructure is usually not well spread and traffic may be a common issue, so people want to stay near of the places they need to go or that are well developed. So it's not uncommon for tall buildings and luxury houses being packed, very near from each other.

Hence, in Brazil the periphery of the cities is where people with low income establish themselves, with the more central areas and specific neighborhoods concentrating the richer ones, and not the other way around how is usual in other countries.

In the periphery it's also common the concentration of slums, known as *favelas*, although they can occur also in many other parts of the city. The *favelas* are usually illegal occupations that over time

become entire communities, and the most mature ones have even self organization bodies. Since they are usually illegal people can't contract basic utility services, so stealing electrical power and water supply is common. *Favelas* usually have serious problems of infrastructure and sanitation.

Housing is a common problem in Brazil since people with low income can't afford a regular house. The government is promoting many programs to build affordable houses for the low income population so they may be able to leave the *favelas*.

There are funds used by the government to finance the buying of housing. This financing is made through state banks at more affordable interest rates and can be used only by people buying its only real estate (it's not for real estate tycoons). The FGTS fund (more on this on the Working Laws section) can be used as part of this financing payment.

### **13.4. Public Security**

Public security is a subject of much debate in the country. The big cities present a high crime rate and generally the smaller ones are hit to some degree. The public security forces (listed and explained in the dedicated section) are always working hard to fight crime, but are hampered by many problems.

The vast majority of crimes are related to or to some degree sponsored by the organized crime. Organized crime operates around factions that fight each other for control of areas, usually impoverished areas or *favelas* from which they operate. They also promote corruption of officials and are even using their money to finance and elect representatives in the Legislatives. Nonetheless, petty theft is very common and should not be disregarded.

The main activity is drug dealing, followed by arms dealing and financing of other crimes, like kidnapping, bank robberies, and so on. It is usual for those criminals to get access to heavy weaponry, including military grade rifles and grenades. Sometimes these organizations promote waves of violence in cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro targeting policemen and government assets. Unthinkable feats, like shooting down a police helicopter and invading and stealing weapons from a military base have already happened.

Another major problem is the bad conditions of the penitentiary system, added to a slow judiciary system. Leaders of factions (or jail gangs) have power inside prisons and are even able to command their organizations from inside, and sometimes promote prison rioting.

A peculiar form of crime in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are the "*arrastões*", waves of robbers that attack a determined area, all together, from beaches in Rio de Janeiro to restaurant areas in São Paulo.

Another peculiar type of crime is the "lightning kidnapping" (*sequestro relâmpado*). Contrary to standard kidnapping, in which the victim is held for a long time while a ransom is required, in the express version the victim, usually leaving an ATM or bank agency, is put in a car and the kidnappers hold the person for a few hours while forcing the victim to withdraw money until their card is maxed out.

The debate around public security usually revolves around those defending a harsher police action, while others see violence as a result from social problems and that should be fought from an educational and social perspective.

### **13.5. Energy**

Brazil is the proud owner of an energy matrix based mainly on the **hydroelectric power**. This type of power has no atmospheric emissions and is cheap, although the construction causes an environmental impact of some degree. The biggest hydroelectric dam in Brazil is Itaipu, in the border with Paraguay, and was constructed in a partnership with this country. From 18 of its turbines, only 1 is necessary to supply Paraguay's complete electrical power needs and the rest of their share is sold to Brazil. This hydroelectric is the second in the world in terms of installed capacity (second only to Three Gorges Dam in China), but since the flow of the Brazilian river is more constant over the year, the yearly energy output is still the largest one.



*Aerial photo of Itaipu Dam. The water flowing is to eliminate excess of water. The 18 turbines are in the Dam, in the background. By Angeloleithold 2005, used under a Creative Commons License.*

The construction of hydroelectric dams in the Amazon basin rivers is a controversial issue since it usually involves the flooding of some forest areas, and sometimes the reallocation of Native American communities.

This dependency of hydroelectric power was an issue in the beginning of the 2000s when consecutive years of below average raining seasons caused an electrical power rationing. Since then many **thermoelectric power plants** have been built and are used when there is no sufficient power from the hydroelectric system. This scenario is happening again in 2014 and the thermoelectric power plants are being used at full power, while there is serious concern about the low water level of hydroelectric dams all over the country.

Brazil has also a **nuclear power plants** in Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro state coast. It has 2 plants in operation, and a third one under construction. Its construction began in the 1980s and since then had a very long and troublesome story, with the second reactor only being activated in 2000.

There is also some **wind parks** installed that generate a relatively small quantity of energy.

While the generation system is mostly held by the government the distribution system is mostly private now after a series of privatizations in the 1990s.

Regarding **oil and gas**, most of the gas is imported from Bolivia, while most of the oil produced comes from oil platforms extracting from the deep ocean, which is a technology dominated by the state held **Petrobrás**, the biggest company in Latin America. Despite this the refining capacity does not reach the demand and a share of the fuel used is imported.

Brazil has no significant sources of coal and no surface oil. This hampered the initial industrialization of the country, since the most basic sources of energy at the time had to be imported.

### **13.6. Transports**

The main mode of transportation in Brazil is **road transportation**, both for passengers and cargo. This explains the high amount of trucks and buses on the roads and highways, and the presence of some of the largest bus transportation companies in the world.

The quality of the roads varies a lot, with roads in the southeast being the better ones. However, most of the “good roads” are under concession to private companies which charge tolls. The bad conditions of the roads are a big issue in the transportation of goods, especially agricultural products that are produced on the interior and must be brought to the coast for export. Roads in the North and Center-West regions are sometimes no more than a strip of dirt opened in the middle of the forest. Poor road conditions also play a major role in the high quantity of car accidents, coupled with the driver’s imprudence.

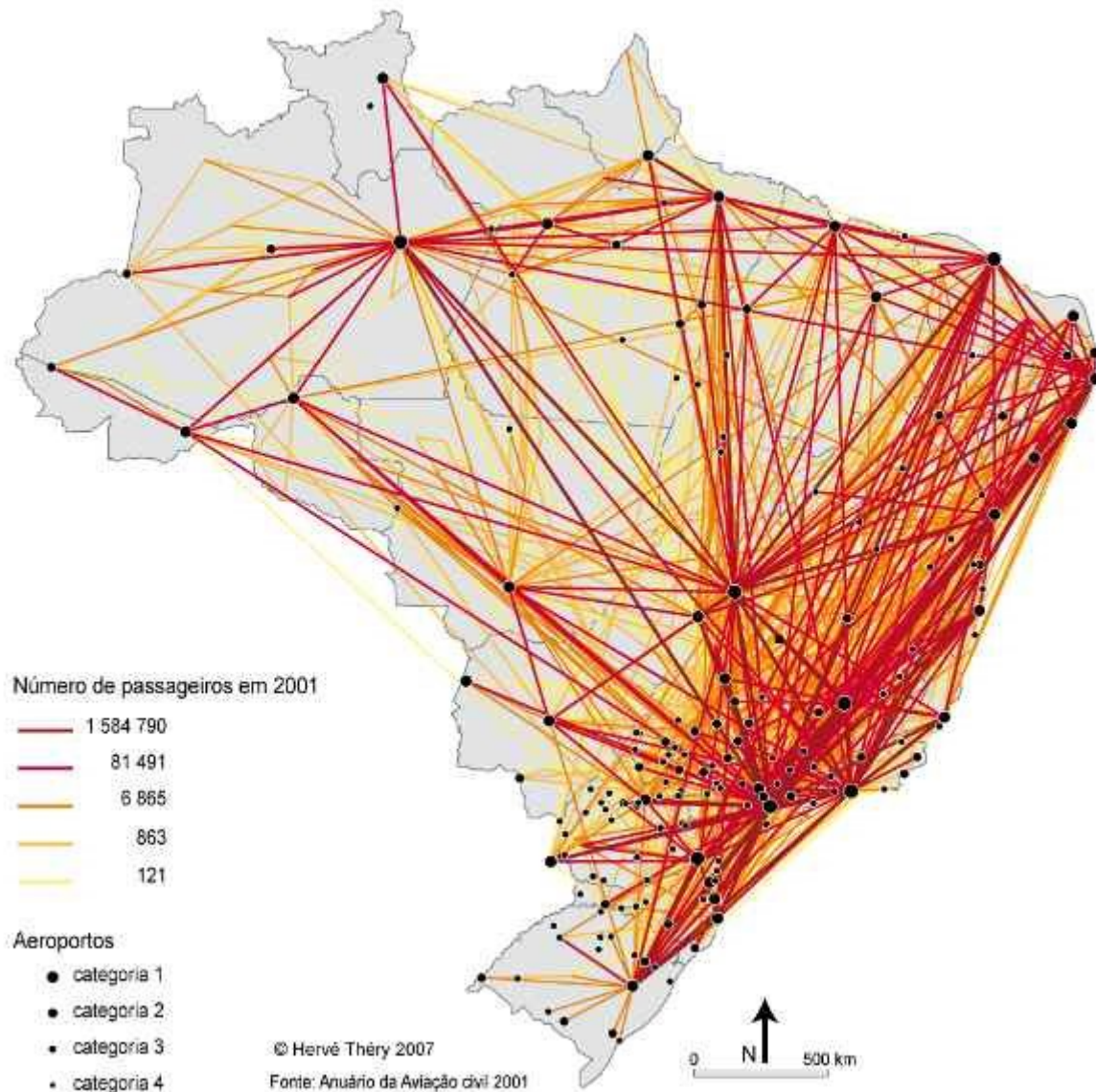
The **railroad system** was once a very important transportation mode in Brazil, but the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw a prioritization of road vehicles which left it in a sorry state. The last decade saw a revival of the railroad system, mostly for cargo transport, although much has yet to be done. Don’t expect to go anywhere by train in Brazil.

**Transport by rivers** in Brazil is used mostly in the Amazon region, which features huge rivers capable of receiving ships of any size. In the other regions most of the rivers are unsuitable for navigation by bigger ships or present relatively short distances to be used due to many waterfalls.

The **ports** in Brazil are plagued with lack of infrastructure, both around it (like highways and railways) and inside it and also with over demand, especially during harvest seasons that trigger big exports of soy beans and other agricultural commodities.

**Airports** are present all over the country, although only those in the largest cities and capitals support the operation of bigger aircraft, while the rest support regional and general aviations. The regional regular transportation of passengers is somewhat limited. The main international hubs are in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Investments by the government are being made in airports, also granting concessions to the private sector.

## Fluxos de passageiros



*Civil aviation passengers flux in 2001. Note the main airport hubs. Archela e Théry, used under a Creative Commons License.*

**Urban transportation** is mainly by busses, while the largest cities also present a subway system (being the São Paulo's the biggest one) or some kind of urban train. The bus transportation is usually supplemented by private vans that work with the authorization of the municipality, although there are many irregular ones operating. The systems are usually crowded during peak hours.

### 13.7. Communications

Brazil presents a great number of **newspapers** and news agencies, some of which are amongst the biggest in the world. Some well known newspapers are "Folha de São Paulo", "Estado de São Paulo", "O Globo", "Zero Hora" and "Correio Braziliense".

The biggest editors are "Abril" and "Globo", and the most read **weekly magazines** are "Veja", "Isto É", "Época" and "Carta Capital".

**Television broadcasting** also presents a good number of channels, most of them private, with the most prominent one being “**Globo**” which is among the biggest in the world. There are some government channels, like “TV Brasil” but they are usually not very popular, although the State of São Paulo’s channel, called “TV Cultura”, has been largely recognized as the creator of high quality content, specially for children.

**Radio broadcasting** is also very popular with a great numbers of regional stations. Both AM and FM bands are used, although they usually focus on different contents and publics.

### **13.8. Telecommunications**

**TV and radio broadcasting** are rapidly migrating to digital transmissions and by 2018 the remaining analog signals would be shut off. **Cable and satellite TVs** are also very popular, and usually sold together with a landline and an Internet connection.

**Internet providers** are available in many modes of transmission in the more urban areas, although the most remote areas usually also present some kind of option.

**Telephony** saw a very fast growing after the privatization of state companies in the 1990s. Now, landlines and cell phones are available from different companies at very affordable prices. The landline companies operate on designated regions (so each region of the country is covered by one of them), while the cell phone, cable and satellite companies can operate nationwide. The most common cell phone carriers are “**VIVO**”, “**Claro**” and “**TIM**”.



## 14. Culture

Brazil presents a very rich culture, the result of a mix of African, Native American, Asian and European traditions. Cultural aspects vary widely from region to region and at the end they typify the many regions and its people.

Among all cultural manifestations, including the folklore, festivals, dances, stories, superstitions, literature and so on, I chose the ones below to be detailed since I consider them the most relevant for the intent of this book.

### 14.1. Legends and Myths

There is a long list of legends and myths in Brazil, many of them involving creatures that have some relationship with animals or nature; a large proportion of them live in the forests. Most of these have their basis on the myths of the *tupi-guaranis*, the predominant natives of Brazil, which got mixed up and adapted along the centuries with the ones brought in by the Portuguese and Africans.

The most iconic creature and often considered a symbol of Brazilian Folklore is the Saci Pererê, a one-legged black boy that smokes a tobacco pipe and wears a red cap that is the source of its magic powers. He lives in the countryside and his favorite past time is to apply pranks on villagers and on farm animals. If one can take his red cap receives the chance to have a wish fulfilled before returning it. The Saci (for short) is a typical folkloric creature, based on a native myth, receiving contributions from African (black boy, tobacco pipe) and European (red cap) myths. The Saci Pererê official day is October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Another creature famous enough to worth mention is the Curupira. Its description may vary from region to region, but more often he is a short boy with a long bright red hair, with its feet pointing backwards and that rides a type of South American wild boar. He lives in the forests and its main goal is to protect the forests and the animals. He takes revenge on hunters, lumberjacks and others that harm the environment. His feet pointing backwards are used to leave misleading footprints. He could be considered an early eco activist.

### 14.2. Cinema

The Brazilian cinema lived a golden age in the 1950s and 1960s and desperate times in the crisis of the 1980s. Its rebirth was in the mid-1990s, with the help of culture supporting laws. Since then the production of movies kept steady, mainly with comedies, historical dramas and dramas featuring social problems and urban violence. The Brazilian cinema still struggles to market the movies and fight for space in the theater rooms against Hollywood movies; many good movies are relatively unknown by the mainstream audience.

### 14.3. Novelas

The soap operas (or *novelas*) are very popular and influential since the advent of television in Brazil. The most watched are the ones from **Globo** channel, being the 9 p.m. one the most watched. Those shows have high production values and their actors are usually the ones featured in Brazilian movies as well. The shows are usually 9 months long, with an 1 hour episode every day, except Sundays.

It is in some ways the Brazilian version of United States' sitcoms. Before the last episode the country stops to find out and make bets on who killed who, what's going to happen to the villain and so on.

The themes are varied, with some being more comic and others more dramatic, sometimes portraying social issues.

#### 14.4. Music

Music is one of the most worldwide known aspects of Brazilian culture; the Samba is as famous as Carnival Parades. Bossa Nova (a variation of Jazz) was widely popular in the 1960s, with composers like *Tom Jobim* and iconic songs like the *Girl from Ipanema* and *Corcovado* being played worldwide. Of course there's also plenty of traditional and folkloric music and dances, generally typical of a region.

Nowadays every kind of music has some degree of following in Brazil, from every kind of electronic music, to rock, pop, erudite, rap and so on. While many of the music played on the radios are imported international hits, some native genres are the most spread. The following genres are the most popular in Brazil, and if you stay in for some time, you'll not hear them only if you're deaf. Of course this list is not exhaustive, and others have been kept out for the sake of brevity (like *frevo*, *olodum*, *choro*, *maracatu* and many others).

**Sertanejo:** It's the Brazilian country music. It's appreciated nationwide, even in big cities. Born from traditional country music it became a big business in the past decades. It's almost always played by a pair of musicians wearing cowboy hats.

**Pagode:** It's a variation of samba, usually played in ensembles. It is very popular on the periphery of big cities, mainly São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Nowadays people usually have a love or hate relationship with it, so it may not be a suitable choice for a party with many guests.

**Forró:** It's a dancing music originated in the northeast, but spread nationwide. The couples dance together (sometimes very tightly) and the rhythm is contagious. Forró houses are common.

**MPB:** The "*Música Popular Brasileira*", or Brazilian Popular Music, is a broad designation that encompasses many genres of music by Brazilian musicians. This includes from romantic music to Brazilian rock.

**Axé:** It's a genre most associated with the Bahia state and widely played during Carnival. As happens to other carnival genres, it's common to be played on a stage on top of a large truck equipped with powerful speakers, known as "*trio elétrico*". This truck drives slowly through the streets while a crowd follows it dancing. This genre is now nationally popular and common in the *micaretas*, carnival-like parties out of season.

#### 14.5. Foreign Influences

Brazilian culture has always been heavily influenced by foreign cultures. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the Brazilian elite imported the culture that was fashionable in Europe and Brazilian most erudite artists tried to emulate them. Even though popular culture existed and was rich and diversified, it was kept for the regular people and looked down by the scholars.

Only from the 1920s, and most notably in the 1940s, that efforts were carried out to produce genuine Brazilian cultural manifestations that were intended to establish a national character. Among those are the Carnival Parades, the samba (that was rescued from marginality) and many erudite productions featuring Brazilian themes.

From the 1950s onwards the North American culture began to have a stronger influence in Brazil, mainly through movies and television shows, especially those that portray the American way of life.

The representation of Santa Claus and Christmas is considered an icon of this influence. Christmas is represented as a snowy season, with houses decorated with pine trees and socks over the fireplace, even though Christmas is held during the hot Brazilian summer, there are pine trees only in the South of Brazil and almost no house have a fireplace. The “good old man” wearing heavy clothes, a cap and driving a sleigh pushed by reindeers is also far off of anything Brazilians can relate, even though Santa Claus comes from the freezing Lapland. It’s discomforting having to see old men wearing Santa Claus clothes in malls and stores at this time of the year; I hope they drink lots of water. Every now and then someone suggests a tropical version of Santa Claus, wearing flip flops, shorts and T-shirt, but it’s not as catchy as the most famous one.

A much more recent import to Brazilian culture is the Halloween, more commonly known as “*Dia das Bruxas*” (Witch’s Day). Only during the 2000’s this event began to be popular among Brazilians, with kids and adults wearing costumes and asking for candies and threatening to do tricks.

#### 14.6. Food and Beverages

If you ask any Brazilian what is the national food, everyone will answer: rice and beans. There are huge variations of regional foods, something that varies more regionally than most other cultural aspects, but rice and beans are omnipresent. The types of beans and regional styles of preparation vary, but the combination is always the same.

An example of a standard lunch that is a “national favorite” would include: rice, beans, salad, something made of potato or manioc, and beef (or chicken). Those ingredients may be replaced by regional variants, but nonetheless it comprises a healthy combination according to specialists. Other favorites include all chicken and bovine meats, barbecues, vegetables, all kinds of pasta, pizza and others.

Bovine and chicken meat are very popular and omnipresent, Brazil’s presenting such a large cattle and poultry production. Pork is appreciated, especially in the south. Fish and seafood are not so popular (and is a bit more expensive than other meats), except for the coastal areas and in the areas covered by big rivers, such as in the North and Center-West. Fruits are widely available and in great variety.

Sugar is highly used in everyday cooking and in candies. The most common candies are made out of fruits, peanuts (like the “*pé-de-moleque*”), coconuts (like the “*cocada*”) and chocolate (like “*brigadeiros*”). The most popular snacks are the cheese bread (“*pão de queijo*”), *pastel* (a pastry), chicken croquette (“*coxinha*”), among others.

The most famous Brazilian dish is the *Feijoada*, a stew of beans, pork and beef. Prepared with black beans, it’s served with rice, cabbage and toasted manioc flour (“*farofa*”). It resembles the French *Cassoulet*.

**Breakfast** is usually accompanied by milk, coffee, bread, butter, yogurt, fruits, and variations around that. It is not common to have hot and heavy food in the breakfast, like omelets, sausages, and so on. In fact, many Brazilians find this type of food disgusting in a breakfast. **Lunch** is a sacred time; everybody stops to have a decent lunch. It’s also a time for socialization and to discuss business; lunch is usually the most important meal of the day. **Dinner** is usually lighter than lunch and may comprise simpler meals or snacks.

The most common **beverages** are fruit juices and soft drinks. The “*Guaraná*” soft drink is the main competitor to Coca-Cola; it is based on a tropical fruit of the same name (which is used in its natural

form as an energetic). *Guaraná* soft drink probably does not contain the real thing, but resembles a sweet champagne.

Regarding **alcoholic beverages** the national preference are the lager beers served very cold. Another favorite (but more expensive) is the “*chope*” (draught beer), which is served in some restaurants and specialized houses. Wine is consumed as well, although not very widely. There is some wine production in Brazil, but most of it is imported. The national distilled beverage is the “*chachaça*”, also known as “*pinga*”, made out of sugar cane. The most famous drink made of “*cachaça*” is the “*caipirinha*”, prepared with lemon, ice and lots of sugar.

## 14.7. Sports

### Football

(Or soccer, but I’ll stick with football since it’s the term used by the British who invented it, so they should know better).

It’s very easy to be a sports commentator in Brazil, since you only need to know about one sport: football. Everybody in the world associates Brazil with football, and the country calls itself “the country of football”. Everybody in the world also knows Pelé, the famous football player, and every new sensational player in Brazil is compared to him as a standard. Brazil has already had many “new Pelés” before they are exported to an European team.

Football in Brazil has mainly two seasons of championships: one in the national level (*Campeonato Brasileiro*) and the other in a state level (*Campeonatos Estaduais*). Both are played in many divisions, being the first division the one with the better teams. There are also other national and international shorter championships during the year. The stronger Brazilian teams are concentrated mainly in São Paulo city and Rio de Janeiro city.

In Brazil everybody is expected to choose a team to support. It comes from an early age, and this decision is heavily influenced by parents and friends, although it’s not uncommon children choosing their teams based on which one is in a good season at that time (everybody likes to support the one that is winning, right?). Football is a subject that plays a kind of social interaction role, allowing people to engage in conversation easier.

It should also be noted that most of the teams have stereotypes associated to them and their supporters. So, beware before choosing yours or people may joke that you are a criminal, a homosexual, a very annoying person, compare you to animals or even be that person that is always out of luck.

For the national team Brazil is the proud country of being the only one that attended all the World Cups (since 1930), and the country with the most wins (5 times), with Italy and Germany following (4 times each). The Brazilian arch rival in football is Argentina, and it fuels the endless argument of which was the best player ever: Pelé or Maradona?

### The rest

Brazil is also strong in other sports, like volleyball, basketball, handball and some other individual sports. However, Brazil has a more or less constant performance at the Olympics, usually totaling no more than 10 medals.

Another liked sport is the Formula 1 that for many decades has one of its stages in Brazil. The country had 3 big winners in the past (Fittipaldi, Piquet and Senna), each one winning 3 seasons. However, after the tragic death of Ayrton Senna in 1994 no new Brazilian pilot got a prominence, despite many promised “new Sennas”, and the interest in the sport is fading away from the general public.

## **14.8. National holidays and festivals**

Holidays in Brazil can be stipulated by the federal, state or municipal governments. The ones valid for the entire country are:

**January 1st:** New Year's Day

**April 21st:** Tiradentes' Day

**May 1st:** Labour Day

**September 7th:** Independence Day

**October 12th:** Our Lady of Aparecida Day

**November 2nd:** All Souls' Day

**November 15th:** Republic Day

**December 25th:** Christmas

The most important festivals are:

**Carnival:** celebrated days before Ash Wednesday. Those are holidays in most of the country, although it is not a national holiday. Parades and parties are held everywhere. The parades in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo are the bigger ones, with Samba Schools competing with each other to win the competition which is determined by a group of judges some days later.

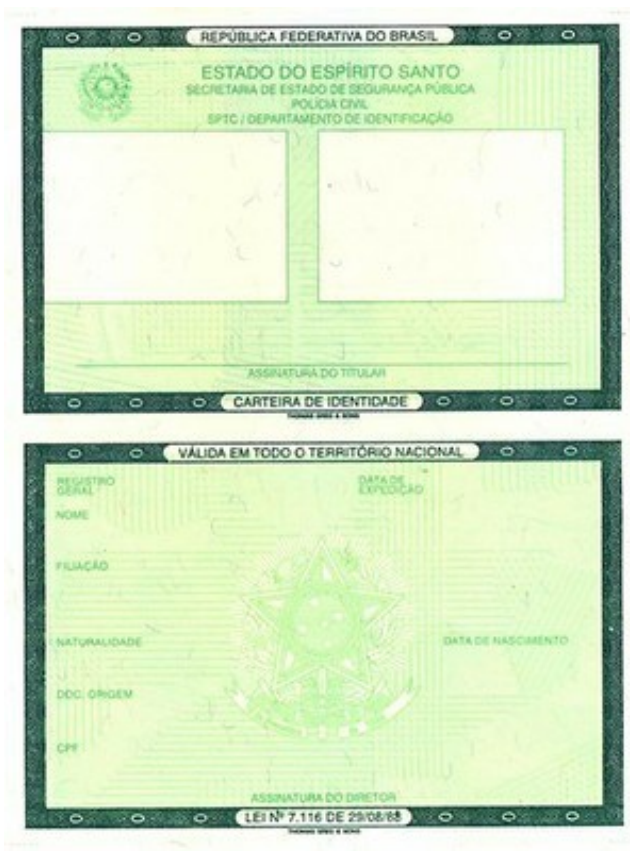
**Junine Festivals:** were originally related to the Catholic Church celebration of Saint John, Saint Anthony and Saint Peter, but today they are a much more wide festival. People dress like old style farm boys and girls and dance the “*quadrilha*”, a type of square dancing, at the sound of traditional country music or forró. The festival features many typical foods and beverages associated with the Brazilian winter.

## 15. Some explanations about everyday life stuff

### 15.1. Documents

There are some basic documents that you would like to know about if living or visiting Brazil. I'll list the most common ones, but of course there are many others, like birth and wedding certificates, real state and vehicle registries, professional IDs, and so on.

**RG** (*Registro Geral*, General Register): also called *Carteira de Identidade* (Identity Card), it's basically an ID, usually the first document a Brazilian gets (in addition to a birth certificate). There's no age restriction. It's issued by each state with slightly different numbering schemes. There are newer and older models of this document. If you're going to live in Brazil you'll have to request the equivalent RNE (*Registro Nacional de Estrangeiro – National Registry for Foreigners*).



*Model of a RG.*

**CPF** (*Cadastro de Pessoa Física*, Physical Person Register): It's like your "commercial" ID (although it does not have a photo). It's your register with the Internal Revenues Secretary and applies to foreigners as well. Everybody doing business or paying taxes must have one. It's usually requested in any commercial transaction, credit checks and even in purchases on the Internet. It is issued by the federal government and has a standard numbering scheme in which the first digit is attached to a group of states, and the number can be validated by an algorithm. The equivalent ID for companies is called CNPJ (*Cadastro Nacional de Pessoa Jurídica*) and have a different number scheme, and you should see that number on any receipt issued by a company.



**CNH** (*Carteira Nacional de Habilitação*, Driver's License): You have to be at least 18 years old to get a driver's license. The current document model features a photo and also lists your RG and CPF numbers. So it works as your everyday document and you can leave the RG and CPF at home. It also lists the categories of vehicles you are allowed to drive (represented by letters from A to E). The license must be renewed at each 5 years including a medical inspection. The first year after your habilitation is a probation time and the license must be renewed at the end of that period.



*Example of CNH.*

**Título Eleitoral** (Electoral Title): I know that foreigners don't vote in Brazil, but I'm including this one for the sake of curiosity. The vote is compulsory in Brazil for everyone between 18 and 65, and optional between 16 and 18 and above 65. To vote you have to present a document with your photo and be aware of the information on the Zone and Section you're registered to vote, indicated in your electoral title. Every time you change your address you have to inform the Electoral Justice and may request to be assigned to a different voting place, which will be updated on your document although keeping the document number. This document is also requested during processes that require you to have no pendencies with the Electoral Justice, like requesting a passport or taking a public employment.



*Model of an Electoral Title.*

**Certificado de Registro e Licenciamento de Veículo** (Certificate of Register and Licensing of Vehicle): known as *Licenciamento* for short, it's your car licensing that must be renewed every year after paying the licensing fee. The limit month to renew your license depends on the last digit of your license plate (low numbers, first months of the year, starting in March). So make sure that you always have this document with you and up to date when driving a car or the police may apprehend it and you'll have a huge headache getting it back.

## 15.2. Taxes

Brazil is a country with high taxes; it is estimated that taxes amount to about 35% of the GNP. If this was not bad enough, the tax law is very complex and ever changing, what creates a burden on business. The government has recently made efforts to simplify the tax laws, especially for small business, and to reduce the burden on certain sectors of the economy. Nonetheless, the government is very efficient on collecting them.

The majority of taxes are embedded in the price of products; others are related to selling assets and other business transactions. But the main taxes on the everyday life that needs you to take action are the following.

**IPTU** (*Imposto Predial Territorial Urbano*): If you own or rent (usually the tenant pays this tax) a real state on an urban area you have to pay this tax. Its value depends on the registered value of the real state and other factors, and sometimes fees are added for garbage collection, water and sewage infrastructure and public lighting. This tax is collected annually by the Municipality, usually in March, and is offered the option to pay in parcels. Real states in rural areas have the equivalent ITR (*Imposto Territorial Rural*).

**IPVA** (*Imposto sobre a Propriedade de Veículos Automotores*): If you own a land vehicle you have to pay this tax on every first months of the year (in January or February). This one is collected by the State and its value varies between 1% and 4% of the current value of the vehicle, depending on its category and type of fuel. It is also accompanied by the "compulsory insurance", that's like a very big insurance run by the government and that you have the right to use in case of accidents and victims. There is also the licensing fee that you need to pay to get a yearly updated "*Licenciamento*", but this one you may pay together with the IPVA or separately up to the limit month that depends on the final number of your license plate.

**IR** (*Imposto de Renda*): The income tax. Who in the world can escape this one? Oh yeah, the ones with no income. The income tax presents ranges of percentage collected on wages, with the ones with low income being exempt and the others in steps up to about 27,5%. Usually it is between 10% or 20% on profits on commercial activities. If you are an employee, the tax is collected by the employer directly to the government. Every year those that are not exempt must send a "declaration" to the Internal Revenues Department (*Receita Federal*), limited from March to the last day of April. The declaration and the dispatch are done completely electronically and through the Internet. The result of the declaration may be either a recovery of taxes that you paid in excess or an extra payment to complete the due amount.

## 15.3. Restaurants and other places to eat

Restaurants in Brazil operate basically in three ways:

"*À la carte*": the traditional way in which you read the menu and select your order, which is brought to your table by a waiter (or waitress).

"By weight": usually named "*por quilo*", "*à quilo*" or variations of these, those restaurants offer a buffet with many different types of food in which you serve yourself and at the end weights your plate on an electronic scale (discounting the weight of the plate, of course) and you pay according to the weight of the food you've taken. Usually those restaurants feature huge plates, so you end up taking a lot of food and don't even realize it. The beverages may be taken at the "scale" place, or a waiter (or waitress) will get to you at your table.

"Rodízio" or "buffet": it's "all you can eat for a flat price". Many types of food can go *rodízio* (Japanese, pizzas, Italian, Brazilian), but the most famous ones are the barbecue houses, called "*churrascarias*", in which servers passes on your table all the time offering a new slice of meat until you use some kind of signal that they provide (usually something with red and green sides) meaning that you don't want anymore for now. At "buffets" you serve yourself on a table with many food options.

Note that those types of serving are not attached to the restaurants themselves. Many restaurants operate in a certain way during the week or the lunch time and then change to another mode in the weekends or dinner time.

It is very rare to have a "wait to be seat" restaurant. Usually you just come in and select a table. It's also not usual to share tables with strangers, but it's acceptable in a crowded "*por kilo*" restaurant.

Other popular choice is the bars, which offers a great variety of appetizers and other plates along with beer, draft beer or something made of *cachaça*. They are usually the choice for social gatherings and a "happy hour" after a working day. A variation of bar is the "*boteco*", simpler bars that offer cheaper beer and more simple food options, usually served on plastic table and chairs sometimes placed in the sidewalk.

The *padarias* are a good choice as well. They are mainly "bread houses", where you go to buy your everyday need of bread and accompanying groceries, like cheese, milk and so on. But most *padarias* also have tables and offer meals and snacks, often directly "out of the oven" with a great variety and accessible prices. They also serve alcoholic beverages and may work similarly as bars. *Padarias* vary greatly and may range from a humble establishment to a very sophisticated and trendy store.

The tips in Brazil for food served on tables are usually 10%, and are almost always embedded in the check (which is good if you drank 3 beers and is not in the mood to calculate how much is the value plus 10%). If you don't want to pay it or pay the full tip because the service was bad you can ask to reduce the amount, but they won't tell you that.

Another common charge is the "*artistic couvert*", a fee that you pay when there is live music in the establishment, more usually in bars; that fee pays the musician. You're not obliged to pay that if you don't want to, but you'll have to ask that. This is especially true if you are just leaving and the musician started playing 3 minutes ago.

#### **15.4. International System of Units**

Brazil uses the international system of units. If you're from a country that uses this system you'll feel at home. Otherwise, it will pay off to get acquainted with this system. Distance is measured in meters, volume in liters and mass in kilos. To convert from big to small units it's just a matter of using powers of ten; there is no need to hassle with inches, feet, miles, ounces, gallons and pounds.

#### **15.5. Currency**

After many currency changes in the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, the **Real** was introduced in 1994 and is now the established country's currency. Its name comes from "reality" or "real" (and not royalty) and its intention was to symbolize that this one would work after recent repeated failures of economic reforms to control the high inflation.

The currency unit is 1 Real, which represents 100 Cents. The symbol is **R\$**, but note that the symbol is not the dollar sign but the "*cifrão*", with 2 vertical lines. In the ISO standard is **BRL** (widely used on the Internet). The name in singular is "Real" and in the plural is "Reais".

The bills are (in Reais): 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100. In 2010 the Central Bank announced the 2nd family of bills, with a new design and lacking the R\$ 1 bill that has been discontinued in 2009. All the bills present different colors and the bills in the second family also present different sizes (the higher the value, the bigger the bill). The bills of the 2nd family are slowly replacing the old ones.







*Reais bills from the 1<sup>st</sup> family. The R\$ 1 bill has been discontinued.*

The coins are (in cents): 1, 5, 10, 25, 50 cents and 1 Real. The 1 cent coin is rarely seen today. The coins also have 2 families and you still can find both designs in circulation.



*Reais coins, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> family. The 1 cent coins are rarely seen today.*

## 15.6. Banks

The Brazilian banking system is one of the most advanced in the world, what doesn't mean that it hasn't flaws. Some Brazilian banks are amongst the biggest in the world, in addition to many international ones operating in Brazil. Due to the high interest rates, the banks have been presenting huge profits during the last decades.

If you need to choose a bank you may select a government or a private one. As long as you stay with the bigger ones there is not much of a difference and at the end they will rip you off anyway with many fees. After all, they are banks like everywhere else. The main government banks are *Banco do Brasil* and *Caixa Econômica Federal*, and the biggest private ones are *Itaú* and *Bradesco*, not considering foreign ones.

In Brazil, the saving accounts are called "*Poupança*" and they are synonymous to saving money, even if you're not talking about the account itself.

The most common methods of payment are money and cards (credit and debit); not much novelty here. However, there are some habits around the use of checks that you should be aware of. First of all, due to the high amount of checks with no funds many commercial establishments doesn't accept them. The second thing is about "pre-dated" checks ("*cheques pré-datados*"). Technically you can't give out a check with a date in the future, however it's a national habit to give out pre-dated checks as a means of guaranteeing that the receiver will not discount it before the agreed date. It is also often used in purchases in parcels, in which you give them out all at once, one check for each parcel with its respective date of discount.

## 15.7. Cars

Brazil drives on the right-hand. This means that the driver is on the left seat and the car is supposed to drive on the right lane of a 2-way road, just like most of the World.

Cars in Brazil feature predominantly **manual shifts**. Automatic shifts are becoming more common, but are still a premium feature. If you rent a car, you'll probably get a manual shift car unless otherwise stated. If you're not used to manual gears and clutches, it would be highly advisable to get a car with an automatic gear, or get used to manual before going out on the streets.

You'll also note that the majority of cars in Brazil are the so called "**Carros Populares**" (Popular Cars), that are the simpler and less powerful cars, and cheap enough for many people to buy. They usually present an engine with 1.0 L (1 liter) of engine displacement and few optionals, but it's easy to find them with air conditioning and hydraulic steering. The most common brands in Brazil are FIAT, Volkswagen, Chevrolet and Ford, while there are still many others with smaller participations.

The most common **fuel types** in Brazil are gasoline and ethanol (the country is a pioneer in the use of ethanol, being used since the 1970s in response to the rise of oil prices). Diesel is reserved for trucks, buses and big vehicles in general. There is also some use of natural gas in vehicles in some specific roles (like taxis), which can be used together with regular fuel.

Most cars in Brazil nowadays are "**Flex**", which means that you can use gasoline and/or ethanol at any ratio, and the car will work seamlessly; when you go to a gas station, you choose your preferred fuel. As far as prices go, the balance point of prices is when the liter of ethanol is about 70% of the price of the liter of gasoline. Some cars even come with a graph to help you decide, and most gas stations provide the current ratio of prices. You also should note that a tank full of ethanol has a significant smaller autonomy than the same amount of gasoline, but the ethanol provides a little bit more power.

**Gas stations** in Brazil are always manned by employees that will perform the full fueling routine for you, and usually they will offer to wash your windshield and check your engine's oil and water levels (and try to sell you something, like an oil change).

There is a considerable amount of **motorcycles** on the roads and streets, and they usually pass between the cars, especially in heavy traffic conditions. So you really should be aware of them in order to avoid accidents.

The **license plates** are standard. They always carry 3 letters followed by 4 numbers, and a small strip above it with the state and city of register. The background color is gray for common vehicles, red for public transportation and taxis and other colors for specific uses. There is no difference between states. A set of 3 letters are handed out to each **DETRAN** area (the transit and motor vehicles department), which assigns those 3 letters followed by a sequential number for each registered



vehicle, until the numbers run out, and they receive a new set of 3 letters. Thus, all cars with "CDE" plates have been registered at the same region, and cars with "DEF" plates have been registered after the ones with "CDE". This is interesting because if you know some sequences, you know their place of registry and can estimate the age of the car solely based on the license plate.

Another important aspect to understand is about the **fin**es. Every traffic infraction in Brazil is classified in Light, Medium, Grave or Very Grave, each level corresponding to 3, 4, 5 and 7 **points** respectively, and a fixed fine value. Every time a fine is issued its corresponding points are allocated to the car owner's driver license. If the driving license reaches 21 points it is suspended (not automatically, but after a process) and the driver needs to go through a rehabilitation process. Of course, if it was not the car owner driving at that moment, he/she can transfer that infraction's points to another driver, like someone from the family (but this must be agreed between both parties; you can't transfer points to someone not willing to receive them). After 1 year of each infraction the points relative to it are subtracted from your records total.

### 15.8. Addresses

Addresses in Brazil are indicated by the name of the place, usually a street (*rua*) or avenue (*avenida*), number of the building, followed by the postal code called CEP (*Código de Endereçamento Postal*), city and state. The CEP is 8 digits long, in the format NNNNN-NNN.

Building numbering is given in reference to the city's mark zero, usually in the downtown. Numbering begins in the tip of the street nearer to the mark zero and increases along the road as it gets farther away; following in this direction, numbers are even in the right side and odd in the left side. Some cities may have different schemes, but the most common one is like that.

### 15.9. Telephone

Making and receiving phone calls in Brazil is pretty standard. The international code of Brazil is 55. The area codes have 2 digits (for São Paulo city it's 11, and for Rio de Janeiro city it's 21).

However, when dialing from one area code to another there is a little catch. You'll often see phone numbers announced as, for example, "(11) XX 5555-5555". The "11" is the area code and the "XX" in the middle of the number is the operator of your choice. In Brazil you can choose which operator you want to use based on your personal preference or the one with the best rates. Just dial the operator's number where you see the "XX". Usually for landlines you have 2 choices, being the landline provider for the region (you'll have to find out what it is) and a nationwide one, and for cell phones there is an operator that is cheaper for each mobile carrier.

Another feature worth mentioning is that you can carry your cell phone number when changing carriers, i.e., you can keep your current cell phone number when migrating to a competitor carrier.

Public phones, as in the rest of the world, are decreasing in numbers in the streets due to the popularization of cell phones. In Brazil they are called "*orelhões*" (big ears) due to the rounded case that protects the device from the weather and gives some privacy to the user; you'll understand the name when you see one.

## 16. Some funny (and not so funny) stuff about the Brazilian popular culture and way of life

### 16.1. Stereotypes and Character

As in any other place stereotypes exist in Brazil, related to foreigners, to regions of the country and to itself. As a big and diverse country, it's natural that regional "characters" arise and stereotypes are formed.

However, most of the stereotypes are jokes and used in a jokingly context. Some may be offensive, others not. But after all they do not constitute real prejudices (at least most of the time).

To not incur in the risk of being criticized of reinforcing those stereotypes I will not describe them. However I'll point out some interesting points.

### International Stereotypes

It seems that every country has another country as a target for jokes. The people from this target country is usually portrayed as dumb or extremely naïve. It's common for jokes to be the same all around the world with just the main character changing nationality. As Brazil is no exception, you should know that the target is Portugal. It seems like a bit unfair since Portugal is the "mother" of Brazil, historically and culturally speaking.

You also should know that every white foreigner is considered a "*gringo*". Technically, this term should apply only to Americans, but if you're white and do not speak Portuguese, you'll fall in this category.

### National Stereotypes

National stereotypes are abundant and very creative. Without making any correlation, I'll cite some examples: there are the lazy ones, the hard partying ones, the distrustful, the "macho man", the outlaws, the workaholic, the *bon vivant* and so on, in addition to all the "speaking" and "ways of dressing" manners.

There is also some rivalry between people from São Paulo city and Rio de Janeiro city, each one accusing the other of being too much this or that, and claiming that their city is better.

### Self Image

Every nation has an image of itself which helps to shape the set of beliefs that constitute what specialists call the "**national character**". Of course self images vary from person to person, and from regions within the country. As far as a general Brazilian national character goes, I could separate into two opposites: a bright and a dark version.

**Bright self image:** Brazilians are honest, hard working, like to help others, have a welcoming attitude to foreigners and newcomers, have a relaxed and informal relation with others, are creative, adaptable and resilient.

**Dark self image:** Brazilians try to get advantage of or outsmart others, do not follow the rules, consider normal that powerful figures get undue advantages or practice corruption, do not value work, do not value education and knowledge, use shortcuts to achieve goals, give too much importance to status symbols.

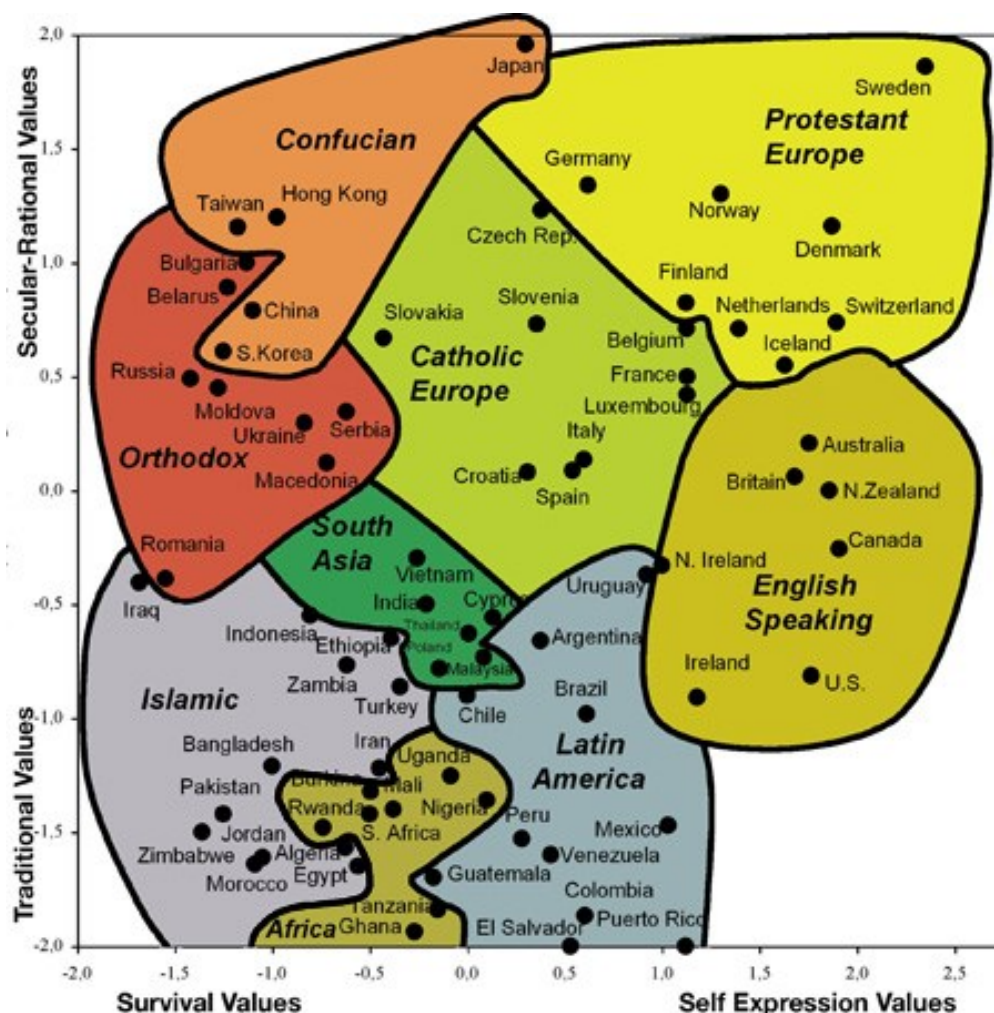
Which one you prefer or consider the more correct depends on your vision.

## National Character

The character of the nations is a subject of much study and debate. It is interesting to know a generalized picture of the culture and behavior of a nation and how it relates to others.

There are 2 interesting studies that help to understand the Brazilian national character.

An interesting study is the **World Value Survey (WVS)**. According to their website (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>), "the World Value Survey were designed to provide a comprehensive measurement of all major areas of human concern, from religion to politics to economic and social life and two dimensions dominate the picture: (1) Traditional/ Secular-rational and (2) Survival/Self-expression values. These two dimensions explain more than 70 percent of the cross-national variance in a factor analysis of ten indicators-and each of these dimensions is strongly correlated with scores of other important orientations."

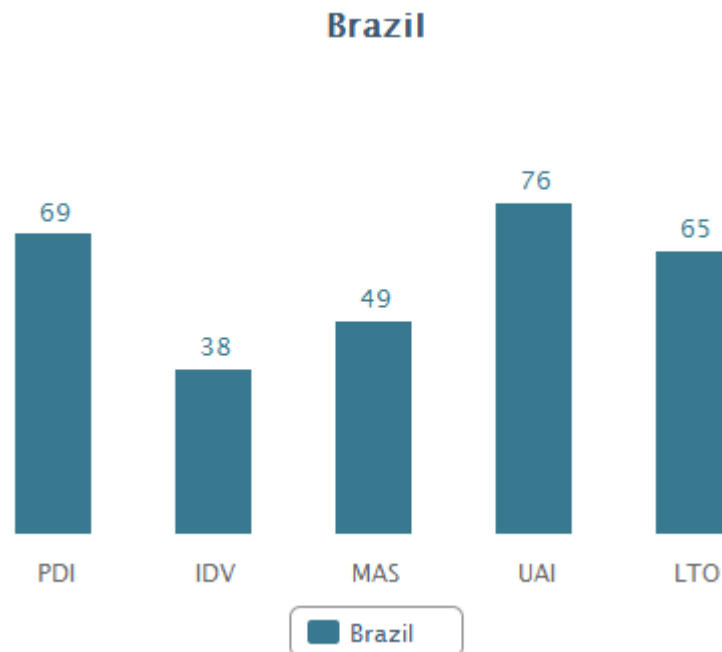


Groups of nations according to their cultural values. Brazil is in the Latin America group.

Source: Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, "Changing Mass Priorities: The Link Between Modernization and Democracy." *Perspectives on Politics* June 2010 (vol 8, No. 2) page 554. From WVS website.

As shown in the graph, Brazil is a country that cares about traditional values, although halfway in the scale, at the same time that presents more self-expression values, but somewhere near the center of the scale.

Another interesting study is the **National Culture Dimensions**, from the **Hofstede Centre** (<http://geert-hofstede.com>) which analyses how values in the workplace are influenced by culture through the use of 5 indexes. Here is a reproduction about the analysis of Brazilian culture:



*The 5 indexes from Dutch Professor Geert Hofstede on National Culture Dimensions for Brazil. From the Hofstede Centre website.*

Below is the analysis presented in their website (from <http://geert-hofstede.com/brazil.html>):

### **What about Brazil?**

*If we explore Brazil's culture through the lens of the 5-D Model, we can get a good overview of the deep drivers of Brazilian culture relative to other world cultures.*

#### **Power distance (PDI)**

*This dimension deals with the fact that all individuals in societies are not equal – it expresses the attitude of the culture towards these inequalities amongst us.*

*Power distance is defined as **the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.***

*At a score of 69 Brazil reflects a society that believes hierarchy should be respected and inequalities amongst people are acceptable. The different distribution of power justifies the fact that power holders have more benefits than the less powerful in society. In Brazil it is important to show respect to the elderly (and children take care for their elderly parents). In companies there is one boss who takes complete responsibility. Status symbols of power are very important in order to indicate social position and “communicate” the respect that could be shown.*

### **Individualism (IDV)**

The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is **the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members**. It has to do with whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "We".

In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In Collectivist societies people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

Brazil has a score of 38 which means that in this country people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive groups (especially represented by the extended family; including uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins) which continues protecting its members in exchange for loyalty. This is an important aspect in the working environment too, where for instance an older and powerful member of a family is expected to "help" a younger nephew to be hired for a job in his own company. In business it is important to build up trustworthy and long lasting relationships: a meeting usually starts with general conversations in order to get to know each other before doing business. The preferred communication style is context-rich, so people will often speak profusely and write in an elaborate fashion.

### **Masculinity / Femininity (MAS)**

A high score (masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the winner / best in field – a value system that starts in school and continues throughout organizational behavior.

A low score (feminine) on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. **The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine).**

Brazil scores 49 on this dimension, really in the middle. The softer aspects of culture such as leveling with others, consensus, sympathy for the underdog are valued and encouraged. Conflicts are avoided in private and work life and consensus at the end is important. Status is shown, but this comes more out of the high PDI.

### **Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)**

The dimension Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? This ambiguity brings with it anxiety and different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different ways. **The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these** is reflected in the UAI score.

At 76 Brazil scores high on UAI – and so do the majority of Latin American countries. These societies show a strong need for rules and elaborate legal systems in order to structure life. The individual's need to obey these laws, however, is weak. If rules however cannot be kept, additional rules are dictated. In Brazil, as in all high Uncertainty Avoidance societies, bureaucracy, laws and rules are very important to make the world a safer place to live in. Brazilians need to have good and relaxing moments in their everyday life, chatting with colleagues, enjoying a long meal or dancing with guests and friends. Due to their high score in this dimension Brazilians are very passionate and demonstrative people: emotions are easily shown in their body language.

### **Long term orientation (LTO)**

*The long term orientation dimension is closely related to the teachings of Confucius and can be interpreted as dealing with society's search for virtue, **the extent to which a society shows a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historical short-term point of view.***

*At 65 Brazil places itself amongst the long term oriented societies as the only non-Asian society. The "jeitinho brasileiro" is really to look for alternatives to do what in Western eyes could be regarded as impossible. Like Asians the Brazilians accept more than one truth. Brazilians easily accept change as a part of life.*

### **16.2. The Mongrel Complex or the Underdog Syndrome**

If you spend some time with Brazilians you'll notice a strong **underdog syndrome** on people. Expressions like "this went wrong because it's that way in Brazil", "nothing can get right in Brazil", "if he was not Brazilian he would not have committed this mistake", "Brazilians are unprepared to compete with foreigners", "the only thing we know how to do are parties", "things will not change soon" and so on are common, along with a propensity to complain about everything. And if the National Football team loses, then there is nothing left.

Of course this sentiment is not part of every Brazilian and many would vehemently disagree with that view. But it is noted on a sizeable proportion of the population and has been acknowledged by writers and scholars over the years and even by the government, that in the 2000s began an advertisement campaign intended to build up national self-esteem with the motto "I'm Brazilian and I never give up".

This sentiment was noted by Brazilian famous writer **Nelson Rodrigues**, who created the expression "**Mongrel Complex**". At first, he was referring to the event of the Brazilian National Football team losing the World Cup finals in Maracanã Stadium (in Rio de Janeiro) to Uruguay in 1950, what caused a national shock that would only be overcome in 1958 after Brazil won its first World Cup. However, the expression resisted to denote this tendency to "place itself voluntarily in an inferior position in relation to the rest of the World". This could be considered a "reversed narcissism".

Historically, the "would be" Brazilian population inferiority has been attributed to different causes. At first, still in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the interbreeding of the population would make it inferior to the more developed nations which populations were all Europeans or mainly white. Following that, by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the culprit was the tropical and humid climate which would make people lazy and luxurious. But soon after, "specialists" found out that the problem was not the population, but the poor health conditions of the general population, what could be solved by science.

In 2004 the New York Times journalist Larry Rohter recovered the expression in an article about the Atomic Energy Program, explaining that Brazil always wanted to be considered a world power by the existing world powers, being a large country with a sizeable population. Meanwhile, foreign authorities mistaking Brazil for Bolivia and foreigners taking Buenos Aires as the Brazilian capital or that Brazilians speak Spanish did not help either. The French President Charles de Gaulle would have said during a political crisis with Brazil (known as the Lobster War) in the 1960s that "*Brazil is not a serious country*" (although the real author is probably the Brazilian diplomat Carlos Alves de Souza Filho, but in the popular imaginary it remains under de Gaulle's authorship).



This nationwide sentiment is very undermining and results in a low national self-esteem. Growing up with the mentality that things will most probably go wrong than right and that you're from someplace intrinsically less worthy than the rest of the world is not part of a recipe for a successful country.

Nonetheless, this sentiment leads to a tendency to complain about everything while acting little, since those things "would not change anyway". Ironically, while Brazilians seems to like complaining about their country, no foreign should ever do that; Brazilians get very angry when foreigners say bad things about their country or corroborate with the "Mongrel Complex". This is a peculiar Nationalism: only nationals have the right to complain about the country, while good traits of foreign nations are often dismissed.

This sentiment is not totally devoided of reason. After decades of poor governments, economic and political crisis, hyperinflation, public constructions taking decades to get completed (or not at all), a political system full of vices, constant corruption scandals in the government and lots of promises and expectations not fulfilled, the national self-esteem is indeed paying a toll.

### **16.3. Brazilians and Latin America**

Brazilians generally don't like to be associated with Latin America. Although many Brazilians like to and are proud to be part of it, many others don't like the connection. Brands and products adapted to Latin America avoid using this term in Brazil.

Sure, Brazil is part of Latin America. Technically, all countries in America colonized by Latin countries (such as Spain, Portugal and France) are Latin American. However, many Brazilians see Latin America as composed only by the Spanish speaking countries.

It's not hard to understand this view, since historically the only Portuguese speaking country in America had had little cultural exchange with its surrounding Spanish speaking neighbors. The Brazilian main urban centers are in the Atlantic coast, far away from its neighbors and separated by vast amounts of unpopulated land, creating an insular effect between Brazil and the bordering countries. This lack of cultural ties, associated with the difference in language, surely did not contributed with the creation of empathy.

Furthermore, since Latin America is often associated with poverty, underdevelopment, violence, drugs and crooked politicians, Brazilians hypocritically like to think that they are not part of it, even though the truth is that Brazil share all those problems and would benefit more if cooperating with the other Latin American countries to find solutions.

### **16.4. "*Jeitinho Brasileiro*" or "The Brazilian little way of doing things"**

This is surely an interesting topic, much debated in society and a subject of many academic studies and books. The Brazilian little way of doing things, commonly just called "*jeitinho*", is a way of solving difficult or unexpected situations in an informal and creative way, with an out of the box thinking, improvising, adapting and being flexible, sometimes out of sheer necessity and lack of resources. This seems like a good thing. Creativity, out of the box thinking, improvising and adaptability are all traits much valued in the economy today.

Unfortunately, there is a dark side. The "*jeitinho*" also usually means taking shortcuts, using personal relations and positions of power to flexibilize laws and rules, taking actions with dubious ethics, focusing in short term benefits instead of long term results, and ultimately associated with corruption.

It is the belief that if you're clever and charming enough, you can get around or bend laws and rules, what is much easier if the person is in a position of power.

The "*jeitinho*" is also thought as a mean to go around a draconian **bureaucracy**, which often creates barriers to people access government services so government officials can sell an easier way in. In order to get the easier way one must have money, power or influence, thus using the "*jeitinho*". All this bureaucracy and the bends in laws and rules lead to a high degree of **formalism**, in which documents, papers, stamps, seals and other types of registers, records and cross checkings play an important role to secure contracts and other types of relations.

The "*jeitinho*" is regarded as both a good national identity trait and a deterrent of progress, which requires more solid solutions, impartiality and respect to laws and rules. However, although Brazilians like to think that this behavior is a national trait that helps to define a national character, it is present in many other cultures and goes by different names.

A closely related behavior is the "*carteirada*" or its variant, the "Do you know to whom you're speaking with?". The *carteirada* happens when someone shows its credentials "in the face" of someone else (or just boast to have it, like knowing someone important) to prove that they have power or a higher social standing and thus deserves a special treatment, usually a relief from some rule or law. It's based on the assumption that a special kind of citizenry is above the laws and rules, that would only apply to ordinary people.

So, when in Brazil someone says that will have a "*jeitinho*" or "*dar um jeito*" to solve something, you already know what it means.

### 16.5. The "Despachante"

The *despachante* is a peculiar figure created out of the bureaucratic government structure. They have offices and you can hire them to take all the lines and fulfill all the forms and everything else that need to be done in order to get an official something. You're in fact hiring them to save all your time and effort in getting through the bureaucratic system. The point is that they usually know shortcuts in the process and will usually get something faster than you would (he knows the "*jeitinho*"). The importance of the *despachante* is decreasing over time, since many procedures are now online or have been simplified.

Unfortunately, government officials may sometimes create barriers in the processes in order to sell the "solution" to the delays. After many unsuccessful attempts, when argued if there is an easier way, they may indicate you a "friend" that when hired will behave much like a *despachante* and share the profits with the official. In this case it is configured as corruption and the person may denounce it to the appropriate organizations.

### 16.6. Diminutive Words

After some time in Brazil you'll realize that Brazilians use diminutive words a lot. It is characterized by the use of suffixes "*-inho*" and "*-inha*". Of course they still carry the meaning of something smaller than normal, but most of the time the diminutive is used to decrease the apparent importance or to talk affectionately and in a cute manner about something or someone.

So, if someone asks you to wait a "*minutinho*" (little minute), it doesn't mean that you'll have to wait for less than one minute (probably it will be 5 or 10), but it means a small amount of time that the person wants you to think that is really without importance.

If someone invites you to drink a “*cafezinho*” (small coffee), doesn’t mean that the coffee is small (it usually is anyway, and very strong), but rather that the invitation is for something simple and informal.

When someone refers to an object or person in the diminutive, it is an affectionate manner to refer to them (unless they are actually small). So, “*casinha*” (small house), “*carrinho*” (small car) and so on are not necessarily small, but rather much appreciated.

### **16.7. Santos-Dumont and the invention of the airplane**

If you say to any Brazilian that the **Wright Brothers** invented the airplane, either he/she will look startled at you or you will begin an endless argument. To all Brazilians, **Santos-Dumont** invented the airplane in 1906, after demonstrating it in front of the Eiffel Tower and winning a prize. There is no doubt about that. He’s even the patron of the Brazilian Air Force.

Santos-Dumont is a national hero, and discussing if he has or not invented the airplane is not only a question of historical accuracy but one of national pride. It’s not the intention of this book to give an answer to that question and I suggest that you also don’t try to give an answer when in Brazil. By the way, he also brought the wrist watch back to be a fashionable thing, or so the legend says.

### **16.8. Brazilians and the sense of time**

As happens with other cultures, Brazilians have a more relaxed sense of time. The degree of relaxing depends on the region and on the context.

Scheduling something to a determined time may not be an easy task. It’s usual to schedule important events, such as weddings, to at least one hour earlier than the expected time of the event. The extra hour will allow people to arrive before the actual event. If you invite someone to your house or to a social gathering expect at least 30 minutes or 1 hour of late arrival. And if you’re invited to one, consider arriving at least 30 minutes later or you risk finding the host still unprepared. In professional settings arriving late to meetings is less acceptable, but still common.

## 17. Cultural References

If you want to know more about any country, cultural references are a great and fun way.

### Movies and TV Series:

Movies are great to understand more about other cultures. Although they are usually focused on a single topic, the addition of drama and context helps the understanding.

#### **Carlota Joaquina – Princesa do Brasil** (1995):

The movie depicts the move of the Portuguese Royal Family to Brazil in 1808 fleeing Napoleon troops. The movie is told in a comedy mood and its central theme is **Carlota Joaquina**, a Spanish princess married to the King of Portugal and protagonist of many morally questionable behaviors. Although the historical characters are depicted somewhat as caricatures, the movie shows well the Brazilian society at the time and the impact of the court presence in Rio de Janeiro. The movie is also considered the mark of the Brazilian cinema rebirth.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0109380/>

#### **Caramuru - A Invenção do Brasil** (2001)

A comedy on the story of **Diogo Álvares** (a real person), a Portuguese map illustrator that reaches the Brazilian coast after his ship sinks. He is saved by the Indian chief Itaparica and his two daughters, Paraguaçu and Moema. They call him Caramuru and together they engage in a happy love triangle. However, he is invited to visit the French court and brings only Paraguaçu. The Native girl is as exotic to the Europeans as Europe is to her.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0298786/>

#### **Desmundo** (2002):

A young and religious orphan woman comes from Portugal to Brazil to marry a rude sugar-cane plantation owner in 1570. A depiction of the precarious conditions of the early settlements.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0293086/>

#### **Mauá - O Imperador e o Rei** (*Mauá – The Emperor and the King*) (1999):

The story of the **Baron of Mauá** (1813-1889), a Brazilian entrepreneur that was amongst the richest men in the world at the time, whose properties were larger than the Empire budget. A progressive, he sought to begin the Brazilian industrialization, but struggled with the oligarchic agricultural elites that held the political power and saw the country with a vocation to agriculture for exportation only. The movie depicts its enterprises and his path from poor to rich, and back to poor.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0218430/>

#### **Guerra de Canudos** (*War of Canudos*) (1997):

It's the drama of a family during the war of **Canudos** (1896-1897), a village in Bahia State formed by a social-religious movement led by a messianic leader and that took some failed attempts by the Brazilian Army to be defeated, resulting in the bloodiest revolution in the History of Brazil.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0130748/>

#### **O Auto da Compadecida** (2000)

A comedy based on a book by **Ariano Suassuna** and critically acclaimed. The story passes on the arid region of the Northeast in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and depicts the local society at the time. All the characters have moral flaws and try to outsmart each other, but eventually all of them die only to be judged by Christ, the Devil and the Virgin Mary.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0197139/>

**Olga** (2004):

The true story of **Olga Benário**, the German-born wife of Brazilian communist leader Luís Carlos Prestes. The movie shows the communist movements during the 1930s, the failed *Intentona Comunista* coup of 1935 and the communists' prosecution during the dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945). She was arrested and deported to Nazi Germany where she died in a concentration camp.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0196811/>

**For All – O Trampolim da Vitória** (*For All – Springboard to Victory*) (1997):

During World War II, the USA established its biggest military base outside their country in **Natal**, Brazil, near the eastern point of Americas. This base served as a logistical point for the North African and European theaters, and is the springboard of the title. The movie depicts the impact of American influence in people's lives and behavior, and the creation of a party in the base called For All, that legend says (incorrectly) was the origin of the popular rhythm called Forró.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0137546/>

**O Bem Amado** (*The Well Beloved One*) (2010):

This comedy is based on the soap opera by **Dias Gomes** that was exhibited in 1973 and was one of the first Brazilian soap operas exported worldwide. It tells the story of **Odorico Paraguaçu**, the vain, charismatic and corrupt mayor of the small town of Sucupira, that doesn't see problem deviating public money for his own agenda but is nevertheless loved by the people, making him a great comic character. His most grandiose project is the construction of the town's cemetery; the problem is that nobody dies to open it, an event planned to happen as a great fanfare. Most of the movie goes around his schemes to find a body to bury, what ends up in an unexpected ending. Odorico Paraguaçu is a caricature of the populist and corrupt politician typical of the small towns. He's a character that was incorporated into the national culture and is still referenced today as a portrayal of how politicians behave in Brazil.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1410297/>

**Uma História de Amor e Fúria** (*Rio 2096: A Story of Love and Fury*) (2013):

This animation tells the story of a native warrior and his loved one, Janaína. Based on the myths by the Tupi natives, upon death the warrior turns into a bird that must search for reincarnations of his loved one, then turns back into the shape of a man and together they must fight Anhangá, the bad spirit, embodied as the story villain. The story goes through three critical historical moments of Brazil (early settlement and fight with the French, a popular uprising in Maranhão after independence and the students struggle against the dictatorship in the 1970s) and one fictional future in 2096, where water is scarce and a big business. The social inequality, injustice and exploitation of the poor are recurrent themes.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2231208/>

### **Getúlio (2014):**

A depiction of the last days of **Getúlio Vargas**, which ruled Brazil as a dictator between 1930 and 1945 and promoted many reforms that granted him the nickname “Father of the Poor”. He came back to power democratically elected in 1950 but faced staunch political opposition. The movie starts with the attempted murder of an oppositionist journalist, **Carlos Lacerda**, which ended up in the murder of an Air Force Major. The opposition and the press blamed the attempted murder on him, and the Armed Forces pressed for investigations which led to people near the President, but not himself. He was pressed to resign by the opposition, Armed Forces and riots in the streets, but he knew that his resignation would probably lead to a civil war, and remaining in power would lead to a *coup d'état* (what actually happened 10 years later in 1964 by the same military that threatened him). So he decided to commit suicide, leaving a testament letter that is one of the most important historical documents of Brazil.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3046062/>

### **Rouge Brésil (Brazil Red) (2012):**

Based on the 2001 historical novel of the same name by **Jean-Christophe Rufin**, the movie recounts the unsuccessful attempt by the French to establish a colony in what is today Rio de Janeiro. In 1555 the French admiral Villegaignon established a fort in an island in the **Guanabara Bay**, planning to create a colony free of the religious prosecution happening in Europe. The story revolves around the cultural exchange between the Europeans and the Natives, the religious conflicts between Catholics and the newcomers Calvinists, and the conflicts between the French and the Portuguese to control the extraction of pau-brasil (brazilwood), the source of the valuable red ink that gives the name to the story. The French are ultimately defeated and some years later Rio de Janeiro is founded.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2070379/>

### **O Xangô de Baker Street (The Xango from Baker Street) (2001):**

This comedy is based on the book of the same name by **Jô Soares**, a famous Brazilian comedian. In 1886 a valuable Stradivarius violin is stolen in Rio de Janeiro and the Emperor Dom Pedro II calls **Sherlock Holmes** to solve the case. Sherlock and Doctor Watson arrive in Rio de Janeiro and are met with all the standard tourist fanfare, like tasty foods, beautiful women, warm weather and a cultural adaptation. However, Sherlock gets involved in the investigation of a mysterious serial killer that cut off the ears of his female victims, what ends up to be the only case that Sherlock never solves in his lifetime.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0171928/>

### **O Tempo e o Vento (Time and the Wind) (2013):**

An adaptation of the first book on the trilogy of the same name by **Érico Veríssimo**, one of the most important Brazilian writers, the story is located in the *pampas* of the state of Rio Grande do Sul (near the borders with Uruguay and Argentina) and spans around three centuries. It tells the story of a family that settles the region and each generation is faced with historical events and conflicts. A good portrayal of the *gaúcho* society and history.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2401711/>

### **O Que é Isso, Companheiro? (Four Days in September) (1997):**



A fictional account of a real story, based on the book of the same name by **Fernando Gabeira** (currently a Brazilian politician), the movie portrays the kidnapping of the American Ambassador Charles Burke Elbrick in Rio de Janeiro in September 1969 by guerrilla groups that were fighting the military dictatorship at the time, in an attempt to trade him for imprisoned comrades. The movie was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119815/>

**Cinema, Aspirinas e Urubus** (*Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures*) (2005)

In 1942, the lonely German Johann travels through the arid roads in the countryside of the Northeast of Brazil in his truck selling aspirins in small villages, using advertisement movies to promote the medicine, what attracts the attention of the population that has never seen a movie before. He meets the drifter Ranulpho and gives a ride to him. Brazil declares war to Germany and Johann has to decide if he should return to his home country and fight in the war or stay in Brazil in a concentration camp; but the option of moving to Amazonas with the migrants of the drought seems to be feasible. A good depiction of Northeast countryside society, poor conditions and politics.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0373760/>

**Cidade de Deus** (*City of God*) (2002):

Two boys growing up in the violent *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro take different paths: one becomes a photographer and starts a relationship with a higher class white girl; the other becomes a drug dealer. This movie became internationally known.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0317248/>

**Tropa de Elite** (*Elite Squad*) (2007):

Depicts the training and operation of an Elite Squad from the police (called BOPE) operating in Rio de Janeiro against organized crime in the *favelas*. This movie became a national hit and is now part of the Brazilian “popular culture”.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0861739/>

**Tropa de Elite 2** (*Elite Squad 2*) (2010):

A sequel to the previous successful movie now depicts the political struggle and government corruption behind urban violence.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1555149/>

**A Casa das 7 Mulheres** (*The House of the 7 Women*) (2003), TV Mini-Series

Set during the longest civil war in Brazil (1835-1845), the **War of the Tatters** in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, told by the point of view of the seven women of the separatist leader's family. Features many historical figures.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0348904/>

**A Muralha** (*The Great Wall*) (2000), TV Mini-Series

Depicts the Portuguese colonization of the Southeastern coast by the point of view of different characters: a Portuguese fiancé, a native girl, a jewish girl and so on. The great wall from the title are

the abrupt mountains that separate the strip of coast from the plateau in this region, constituting an obstacle to those trying to reach the interior.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0231034/>

**Senta a Pua!** (1999), Documentary

A documentary about the First Fighter Group of the Brazilian Air Force, which fought in World War II in Italy. With interviews of pilots still alive and imagery of the time, they recount interesting histories and feats of the group, which *motto* was *Senta a Pua!*.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0320443/>

## **Books (non fiction):**

I'm sure that you can find many books about Brazil in your language. However, those recent books by Brazilian authors have been particularly successful in Brazil. You can check if they have been translated to your language.

**1565 – Enquanto o Brasil Nascia** (1565 – *While Brazil was Born*) (2012), by *Pedro Dória*, published by Editora Nova Fronteira.

The history of the early settlements of the then poor Brazilian Southeast and specially the foundation and the hard early decades of Rio de Janeiro. The text brings up details about the picturesque social life and relationship with the natives, along with the ever shifting alliances and wars against enemy natives and the French, which led to the foundation of Rio de Janeiro in order to divert the native's attacks from São Paulo and other villages. But everything changed with the discovery of gold in Minas Gerais.

**1808, 1822 and 1889:** There is a series of books by Laurentino Gomes about 3 important events in the history of Brazil in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The books are written like a journalistic narration and the language is very accessible and light. They explain interesting and peculiar facts, sometimes revising some idealistic views of those events.

**1808** (2008), by *Laurentino Gomes*, published by Editora Planeta.

In 1808 the Portuguese Royal Family moved to Brazil fleeing Napoleon troops. The book focuses on the move to Brazil and its impact on the development of the colony, which ultimately led to its independence. The book also depicts peculiar and interesting facts of the everyday and private life of the historical figures.

**1822** (2010), by *Laurentino Gomes*, published by Ediouro.

In 1822 the son of the King of Portugal, and at the time the Regent Prince of Brazil, declared the independence of the colony and had to fight the forces of his father. He became the Emperor Pedro I and had to struggle with the newborn legislative assembly and fight to keep the nation united. The book also depicts the night life and love affairs of the Emperor.

**1889** (2013), by *Laurentino Gomes*, published by Editora Globo.

In 1889, without popular support and by surprise, the military declared the Republic of Brazil and exiled the Emperor Pedro II. The book gives an inside view of the events that led to this episode.

**Guia Politicamente Incorreto do Brasil** (*Politically Incorrect Guide of Brazil*) (2009), by *Leandro Narloch*, published by Editora Leya.

Each chapter of the book proposes to deconstruct a legend, myth or distorted view from something of the history of Brazil, from the creation of the *Feijoada* dish, the origins of Samba to the truth of the *Quilombos* (fugitive slaves' communities). The other 2 books in the series include guides on Latin America and on World history.

### **Video Games:**

Video games have long ago ceased to be a simple past time for children and now is considered the 10<sup>th</sup> Art. With access to newer technology, video game titles are turning into a sophisticated cultural media.

**Max Payne 3** (2012), by *Rockstar Games*. In this video game the hero of the series (Max Payne) goes to São Paulo as a hired bodyguard to a rich family, but soon the wife of one of them is kidnapped by the organized crime, what leads the hero deeper in the world of crime in Brazil. The game captures very well the city's ambience. Recurring themes are urban violence, corruption, police violence, organized crime and social inequality.

**Papo & Yo** (2012), by *Minority*. In this action adventure the protagonist is Quico, a boy in an unspecified Latin American *favela* that creates a dream-like World in which his robot doll Lula is animated and he meets a giant monster that he names simply as Monster. He and his friends must solve puzzles in the *favela* in order to progress in the story. The problem is that when Monster eats a frog he gets very aggressive and can hurt Quico, and is only calmed down after eating a coconut. At the end the player finds out that Monster is a metaphor for Quico's alcoholic and abusive father, which leads to a touching ending.

### **Other Resources:**

Maps, statistics and other information by IBGE (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*):  
(link to the English version): <http://mapas.ibge.gov.br/en/politico-administrativo>

## **The End – Part 1 of 2**

Congratulations! You now know a good deal about Brazil, and probably more than most Brazilians. And if you're a Brazilian, I'm sure you learned a bit more about your country.

If you appreciated the work of the author and the price of this eBook (the best price: *FREE*) leave a review on *Smashwords.com* and/or send the author an email at *alessandromattos@gmail.com*.

But this eBook does not end here. If you are interested in knowing more about Brazil the following sections present an overview of the country's history and military history. Keep reading!

## 18. History

This section is intended to give an historical overview of Brazil, highlighting some peculiar and interesting points, always keeping in mind the foreigner reader that wants to understand better the country. Of course a more detailed and encyclopedic version is readily available elsewhere, including in the ubiquitous Wikipedia.

You'll notice that the history of Brazil is characterized much more by evolution than revolution. Even events regarded as revolutions were in fact the continuation of the current system with some changes; there was never a rupture point in the history of Brazil.

Many aspects of the country's history are very peculiar, some defying logic or commons sense, other details bordering the comic. Nonetheless, history always explains much of who we are today.

### Native Americans before the Europeans

South America was the last continent reached by *homo sapiens* (at least according to the specialists); Asian nomadic peoples crossed the Bering Strait, today separating Alaska and Russia, and went southwards.

Brazilian Natives were divided into nations, of which the *Tupi-Guarani* was the most prominent, followed by the *Macro-jê* and *Aruaque*. Tribes shared many cultural aspects, but often battled each other. It is estimated that about 2 million natives lived in Brazil before European contact, but this number is contested. The natives first met by the Europeans called their land *Pindorama*, which means "Land of Palms".



*Tupinambás dancing, by Hans Staden (1525-1579), 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Under Public Domain.*

They were mostly hunter-gatherers, but some tribes practiced nomadic agriculture, in which they planted small crops (usually manioc) and after some harvests and the soil being depleted, abandoned that land and planted elsewhere; they used fire to clean up the land from natural vegetation. They used some polished stone tools and developed refined pottery and art crafts. Some of them practiced rituals of anthropophagy (cannibalism) of captured enemies. They lived mainly along the coast and along major rivers banks.

As with most American Natives they did not developed a written language, so historical events before the Europeans are difficult to trace and culture and myths were passed on orally. So technically they were living in pre-history, in a period equivalent to the Neolithic or Mesolithic in Europe.

No monuments were constructed, like the ones by the Aztecs, Mayans or Incans, or the ground mounds in North America. As with the rest of Native Americans they didn't developed the wheel or iron tools and didn't had access to cattle or horses.

## **Before 1500 – Pre-Discovery of Brazil**

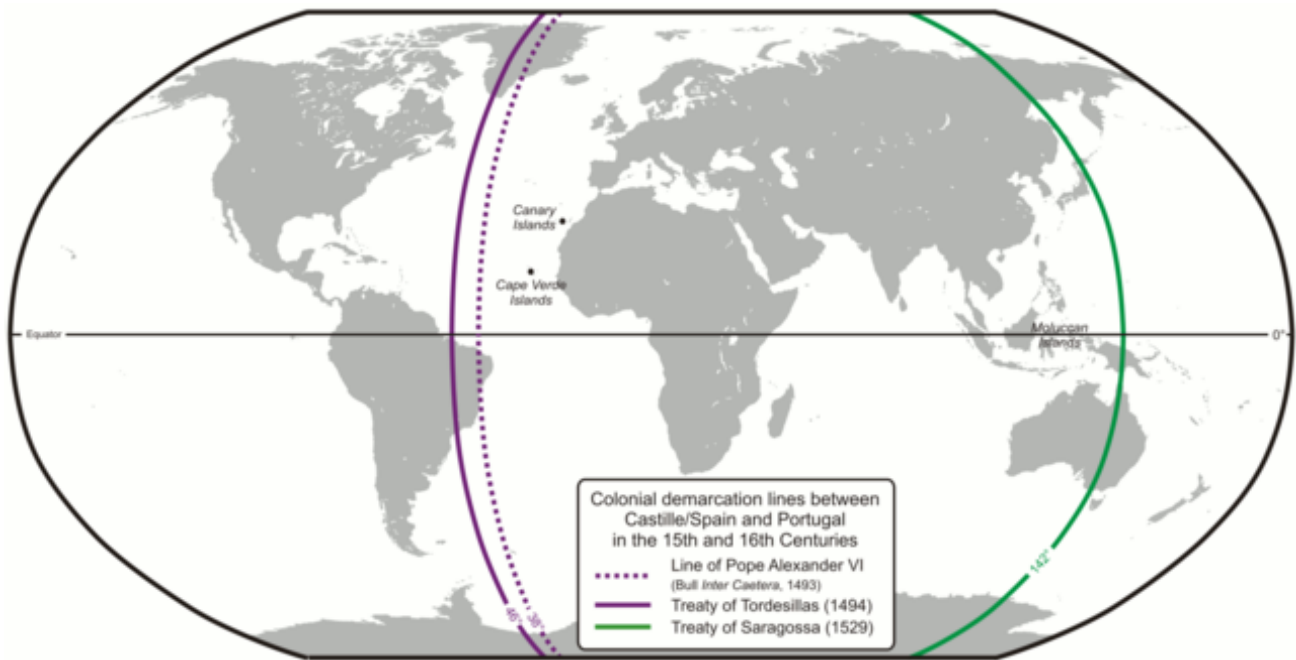
I would like to start going a little bit before the arrival of the first Europeans in Brazil. I recognize that giving too much context may turn something very boring, but in this case this is very interesting and important for the rest of this “story”.

In the 1480s, the **Spanish and Portuguese** expelled the last **Muslim Moors** from the Iberian Peninsula, in which they stayed for centuries. This contact with the Muslims, stronger during peace times, allowed the Iberians to get in touch with the science and technological advances of the Arab world, one of the most advanced and enlightened civilizations at the time.

Among the important knowledge acquired, there were some navigation techniques and the triangle sail, which allowed the Spanish and Portuguese to sail somewhat against the wind and helped fuel their maritime explorations. Overcoming the contemporaneous fears of the imaginary perils of the unexplored oceans, they navigated through the south of Africa and discovered a new path to India, since the land path have been blocked by the Ottoman Turks that conquered Constantinople (now Istanbul) in 1453. Making huge fortune out of the spice trade with India, Portugal and Spain turned into world superpowers with an advanced society, while most of Europe was still struggling to get out of the middle ages.

They were so powerful that they decided to make a very interesting treaty. The **Treaty of Tordesillas** of 1494 divided the new found world (Americas, discovered by Columbus in 1492) into two parts by a Meridian traced 370 leagues (2,193 km) west of Cape Verde islands, being everything west of that line Spanish, and everything east Portuguese. This treaty was even sanctioned by the Pope. The problem is that at that time they could not exactly calculate in which place this meridian line would be, what led to many different suggestions of demarcation. And to complement that in 1529 they signed the **Treaty of Zaragoza**, creating an anti-meridian to the east, to complete the total division of the world into Spanish and Portuguese spheres.





*The world divided between Spain and Portugal, according to the Tordesillas and Zaragoza treaties. By Lencer, used under a Creative Commons Licence.*

## 1500-1530 – The “Discovery”

Some years after the arrival of Columbus in America and the establishment of some Spanish colonies in the Caribbean the King of Portugal, **Dom Manuel I**, realized that he needed to take possession of whatever land he was entitled to by the **Tordesillas Treaty**. So he sent an expedition of 13 or more ships to India, the largest fleet ever sent to the Atlantic so far, commanded by **Pedro Álvares Cabral**. He would navigate west out of Africa, find land and take possession, and then resume his way to India to trade for spices.

**Pedro Álvares Cabral** and his men were the first Europeans to set foot in Brazil (although there are controversies) in the Easter day of 1500 (22<sup>nd</sup> April) at *Porto Seguro* (“safe port” in Portuguese) in the current state of *Bahia*. This is the day of the “**Discovery of Brazil**”. At first they called the new land “*Island of Vera Cruz*”, because they thought initially that it was an island. Later it was changed to “*Land of Santa Cruz*” and finally Brazil.

They landed, contacted the natives, erected a cross, prayed a mass and left. They found a peaceful tribe of natives which were willing to trade and welcomed the visitors. At the example of **Columbus** that called the natives “*indians*”, because he first thought to have reached India, Cabral’s expedition did the same and the natives are still commonly referred today as “*índios*” or “*indígenas*”.



*Depiction of the first mass in Brazil, during the visit of Pedro Álvares Cabral expedition. By Victor Meirelles (1832-1903), 1860. Under Public Domain.*

One very important outcome of this encounter is the letter written by **Pero Vaz de Caminha** (the expedition writer) to the King of Portugal describing their newfound land. This long letter is considered as one of the most accurate descriptions of Brazil on these days, and is often considered the birth certificate of Brazil. It's a very interesting read because it details the impressions of these Europeans upon finding a tropical forest, exotic animals and strange people living naked, and, most importantly, the reactions both parties had, such as the native's spontaneous participation during the first mass celebrated in Brazil, or the Europeans incredulity about people living shamelessly naked. The cultural shock for both sides should have been the equivalent to extraterrestrials landing on our cities today. It's quite amusing today to read about the doubts and questions that arose from this encounter: Is this Paradise or some Holy Land? Are these people hostile? What weapons they have? Do they have some kind of faith? Would they convert do Christianity? And, of course: Does this land have gold or silver?

Unfortunately, as happened in other places of Latin America with the Spanish, the Europeans unknowingly brought diseases with them against which the natives did not had adequate immunity. Measles, smallpox, tuberculosis and influenza charged a heavy toll of native's lives.

However, the newfound land did not interest the Portuguese at first. The eastern commerce (with China, India and Indonesia) was very profitable and dominated by Spain and Portugal, at the same

time that there was no evidence of precious metals or stones in the coast of Brazil (contrary to what the Spanish found elsewhere). Moreover, Portugal is a small country and at the time with a tiny population that was already suffering the burden of so many expeditions, so the settlement of the New World was beyond the possibilities.

In the meantime corsairs from many nations, especially the French, began to land all over the coast in order to trade with the natives and have their help to chop down trees that were used to extract a valuable red dying ink. The tree was called **Brazilwood**, hence, the future name of the country. To defend his possession, the King sent military naval expeditions to guard the territory, what was quite fruitless due to the extent of the coast. At the same time, Portuguese explorers were granted permission to extract Brazilwood themselves paying the king a fee, but they also smuggled it to avoid the taxes. By the way, Brazilwood almost got extinct from overexploitation and today is protected by law.

Until 1530 the only permanent Portuguese holds were some *feitorias*, fortified trading posts used to trade with the natives and as bases for further exploration. They were also extensively used in Africa and Asia.

## **1530-1815 - The Colony**

At that time it was clear that the settlement of the New World was needed to grant possession of the land. The Tordesillas Treaty, although sanctioned by the Pope, was not being respected by other nations that also wanted a piece of land. The new King of Portugal, **Dom João III**, devised a smart plan to settle the New World for free! He divided the Portuguese territory in 15 strips of land that ran from the coast to the Tordesillas Treaty line and they were called **Hereditary Capitancies (1532-1549)**. He then donated those lands to 12 wealthy noblemen that had the resources to settle them. They would be sovereigns of this new land, with almost full powers, and they could pass on their title to their heirs, hence the name. They would distribute *sesmarias* for the settlers, a land distribution system already used in Portugal. However, as with almost anything you get for free, it didn't work. Out of the 15 Capitancies, only **Pernambuco** under **Duarte Coelho** and **São Vicente** (currently part of *São Paulo* state) under **Martim Afonso de Sousa** were effectively settled. The rest of the noblemen never went to Brazil, died in the process or simply failed. By the way, in 1532 the first known elections in the American continent were held in the village of São Vicente (neighbor of today's city of Santos) for the municipality chamber.





*Map of the 15 Hereditary Capitanies with the vertical Tordesillas line marking the western border.  
Map of Luís Teixeira (c. 1574), under Public Domain.*

After this failed attempt the King decided to change for a **General-Government (1549-1580)** and designated **Tomé de Sousa** as its first **General-Governor**, with the mission to establish the first capital

what would become *Salvador* (today's capital of the state of *Bahia*). He did a very good job on organizing the colony. He also brought in Jesuit missionaries who focused on converting the natives to Christianity while providing education and integration in Colonial society; ultimately they were instrumental in all Latin America in the protection of native communities from violent policies towards them.

**Mem de Sá**, the third General-Governor, had the mission to expel the French from *Guanabara* Bay (in today's *Rio de Janeiro*). The French had established the **Antarctic France (1555-1565)** settlement in an island in *Guanabara* Bay and allied themselves with the natives. The Portuguese in turn, allied themselves with natives that were enemies of the first. With the help of a general dissatisfaction of the French with their leadership, **Estácio de Sá** (nephew of Mem de Sá) defeated the French. An outcome was the founding of the city of Saint Sebastian of the January River (*São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro*, today known simply as *Rio de Janeiro*), in homage to St. Sebastian, and *Rio de Janeiro* was then the name of *Guanabara* Bay. The French later tried another settlement in the northeast island of *São Luís*, in today's state of *Maranhão*, known as **Equinoctial France (1594-1615)** because it was near the Equator line. But again they were defeated by the Portuguese and their native allies.

In 1578 the King **Dom Sebastião** disappeared after a battle in Morocco in 1578 leaving no heirs. His uncle **Henrique** assumed the throne, but being a Cardinal of the Catholic Church and almost 70 years old didn't produce any heir either. Then **Felipe II** of Spain claimed the throne through family relations and became king of Portugal and Spain. This situation is called a personal union, when both countries continue independent of each other but have the same sovereign; in this case it was called the **Iberian Union (1580-1640)**.

This was very important to Brazil. The Spain had the military power to defend the colony of foreign invaders, and most importantly, the line of the Tordesillas Treaty had virtually disappeared. This spurred a series of exploratory expeditions to the interior, similar to the *scouts* in North America, which ultimately expanded the Brazilian borders to something very similar of today's lines.

The **Entradas** ("entries") were expeditions financed by the government concerned in expanding the borders and exploring the interior (at the time, also known as "*sertão*"). The **Bandeiras** ("flags") were private enterprises looking for profit and were in search of precious metals and stones, *sertão* drugs (mostly spices and other natural products) and native people to enslave and sell at the coastal settlements. Most **bandeirantes** (the leaders of the *Bandeiras*) were *paulistas* (from São Paulo region) and their leaders were well known. Of course those expeditions got in conflict with the natives, specially the *Bandeiras*, so they had a military component as well.





*Domingos Jorge Velho, one of many famous Bandeirantes, best known for defeating the Quilombo of Palmares, a marooned village of runaway slaves. By Benedito Calixto (1853-1927), 1903. Under Public Domain.*

Since the early settlements the Portuguese allied themselves with some native tribes. Native tribes battled between themselves constantly and they were eager to have the European military technology on their side. Natives were assimilated, with native leaders standing in good social positions in the colonial society and adopting many European customs. But cultural exchange happened in both ways and many aspects of the native culture passed to the colonizers as well, including the native language. The **Língua Geral** (General Language) was a language based on Tupi used for trade by early explorers, like the *Bandeirantes* in the current state of *São Paulo*. The *Língua Geral* spread throughout the colony with the help of Jesuit missionaries, which taught it at their schools, and became the everyday language in the colony. In 1750 the Portuguese government ordered the use of Portuguese and its learning in schools and in 1760 expelled all Jesuit missionaries, leading to the eventual extinction of the *Língua Geral* and the strengthening of the Portuguese use.

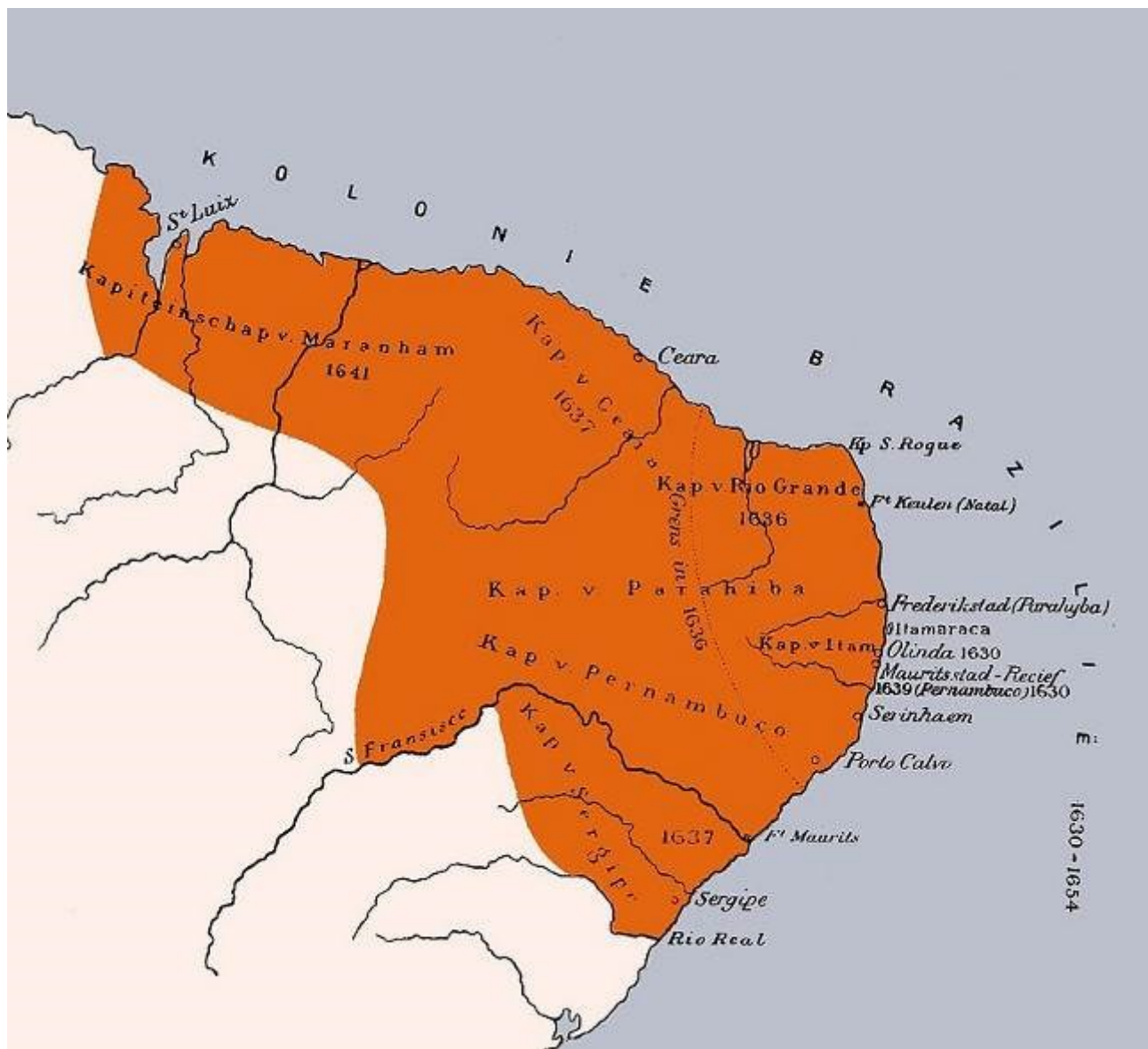
Meanwhile, the first Brazilian economic cycle based on the extraction of **Brazilwood** on the coast, had passed and now **sugar cane** plantations and **cocoa beans** plantations in the northeast were the main



economic activities, with their products achieving very high prices in Europe. But the colonists were not allowed to trade with anyone; Portugal, the Metropolis, had the monopoly over the trade and everything should be sold to Portuguese merchants, which would resell it in Europe. All those plantations required a large workforce suitable for this kind of work, what the enslavement of Native Americans did not fulfill. Soon waves of Africans were brought in as slaves.

The prosperity of the northeast plantations did not go unnoticed. The **Dutch**, living in their golden age and fighting a long independence war against Spain (that was in personal union with Portugal) soon wanted a chunk of the Portuguese colony, and along with it the monopoly on sugar trade in Europe, since they already possessed many of the plantations in the Caribbean. They conquered *Salvador* in **1624**, the capital of the colony, but were defeated by the Spanish the next year in the largest military operation in the South Seas to that date. But they didn't give up, and in **1630** invaded the richest province in the colony, *Pernambuco*. From there, they conquered much of the northeast coast, the South American nearest part from Europe.

Under the leadership of **Maurice of Nassau** they promoted a great urbanization of the cities, especially in *Recife*, *Olinda* and *São Luís do Maranhão*, which can still be seen today. They also promoted religion freedom, which attracted Protestants and Jews and led to the construction in *Recife* of the first Synagogue in the Americas (when the Dutch were expelled, those Jews moved to New Amsterdam, later New York, and constructed a synagogue there as well). Scientists and artists were also brought in and the first American observatory constructed.



Extent of Netherlands possessions in Brasil, from 1630 to 1654. From "Groote Historische Schoolatlas ten gebruike bij het onderwijs in de vaderlandsche en algemene geschiedenis", 1920. Under Public Domain.

However, the Dutch were under constant siege of the Portuguese and their native allies. The Iberian Union was no more and the Portuguese could not count with the Spanish military support anymore. So, at first, the Portuguese had to recur to a *guerrilla* style warfare, recruiting Native Americans and slaves to fight along them; skirmishes and ambushes were frequent. The local elite, owners of sugar cane plantations, initially supported the invaders as they considered that a liberal administration would be good to the business, but dissatisfaction grew and the **Pernambucan Insurrection** ("*Insurreição Pernambucana*") was the last nail in the coffin. It was a revolt led by the elite and supported by the people. While many were Portuguese born and were fighting for the crown, most of the people at the time were born in Brazil and their allegiance was more to the land than to any distant government in Europe; this conflict is regarded as the origin of a Brazilian national identity. With Portuguese reinforcements and the lack of resources due to an Anglo-Dutch war, the Dutch lost

2 battles known as “Battle of Guararapes”, which is regarded as the point of origin of the Brazilian Army, and were finally driven out in **1654**.

Not so much time later, the sugar cane economy was in decline due to the competition of plantations in the Caribbean by the British and Dutch. But by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century *Bandeirantes* discovered **gold** in the interior, mainly in the today’s state of **Minas Gerais** (“General Mines”). At first, the gold was very easy to reach being collected in small rivers and in shallow mines, but soon mines had to be caved. Lots of slaves were brought to the area and worked in very bad conditions, what required constant replenishing of workforce. Later, **diamonds** and other precious gems were discovered. This promoted the settlement of Minas Gerais and the construction of many churches, buildings and art works, which today forms a historical and touristic center in Minas Gerais. Hence, the economic weight shifted from the northeast to the southeast and the capital was moved from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro in 1763.

The Portuguese crown got his share of the profits through heavy taxation. However, as the gold production began to decline, the government still expected to receive the same amount of taxes, equivalent to 20% of the production (and thus known as “*quinto*”, or fifth). This was one of the factors that led to the **Inconfidência Mineira**, a local revolt movement rapidly defeated by the government. One of its participants, **Tiradentes**, was hanged and the body torn into pieces and displayed along the roads; he later was turned into a national martyr. The irony is that a great deal of the gold going to Portugal was in fact going directly to Great Britain, to which Portugal had a big financial debt.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the mines were depleted ending the gold economic cycle. But soon very important events in Europe would change the fate of the colony forever.

## **Slavery**

Slavery was a very peculiar institution in Brazil, so I think it deserves its own section. Slavery began very early with the Native Americans as victims, although slavery itself was not unknown to them since some tribes used to enslave captured enemies. In the beginning they were willing to work in the Brazilwood extraction in exchange for cheap manufactured products, but working in sugar cane plantations was heavy and required a sedentary life that the Natives were not willing to accept. Slavery soon followed to the natives not allied with the Portuguese, with *Bandeiras* expeditions being formed to, among others, capture natives in the interior; a *Raposo Tavares* expedition in 1629 captured about 60,000 natives. Native American slavery was abolished in 1755 by the **Marquis of Pombal** and this cause always counted with the support of Jesuit missionaries.



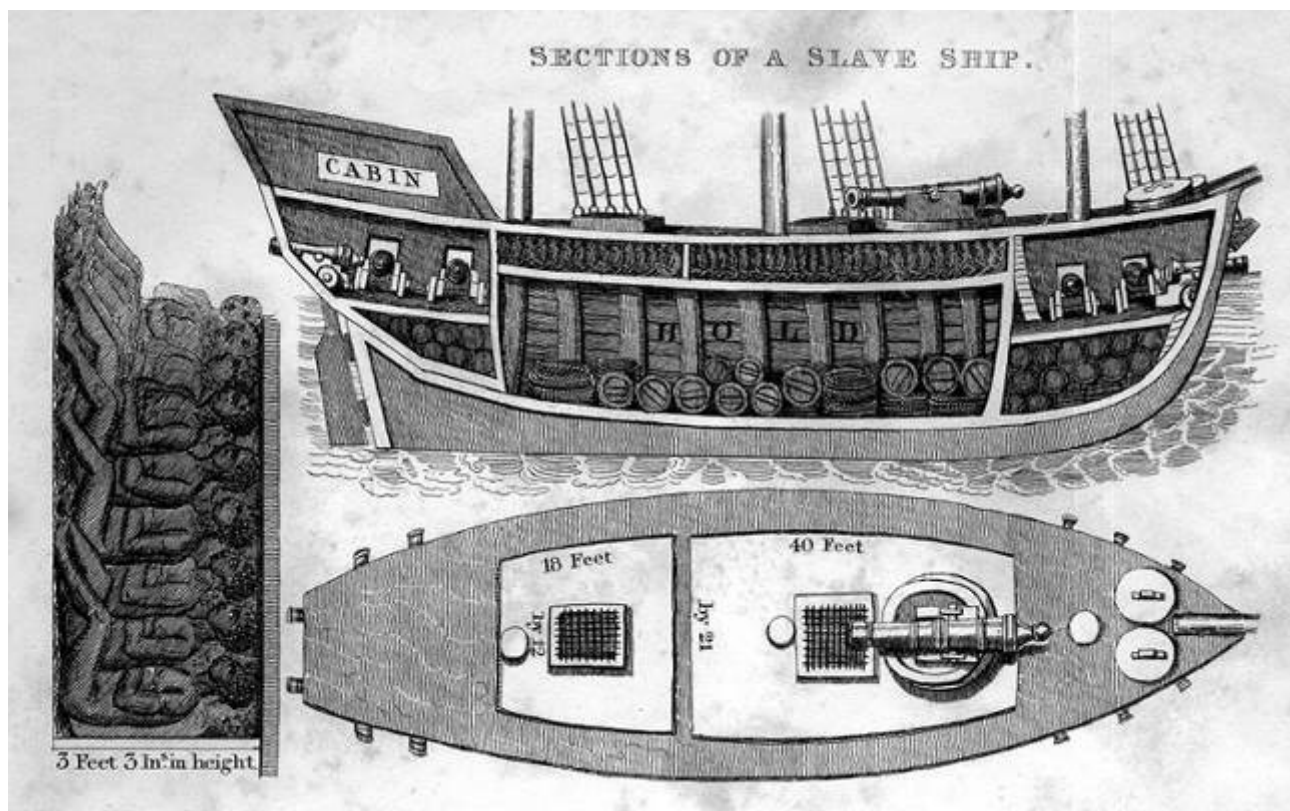
*Native soldiers escorting Native American prisoners. By Jean-Baptiste Debret (1768-1848), circa 1830. Under Public Domain.*

Slave traffic from Africa was the new source for the needed workforce. Brazil received 40% of all black slaves brought to the Americas (about 4 million people). This high ratio occurred because working and living conditions in sugar cane plantations and mines were very poor and life expectancy was low, and a lack of women prevented much local reproduction; so, constant replenishing was necessary. Moreover, although the traffic was outlawed in 1850, **illegal traffic** continued and Brazil was the last country on the Western World to abolish slavery, in 1888.

Contrary to the belief of many, slavery in Africa did not start with the arrival of Europeans. Slavery was common in African societies much before the first Europeans set trading posts (under the authorization of local leaders) in the Western Africa coast. They traded for slaves and other African products; Europeans did not enter Africa to capture slaves.

The trade with Africa worked in a “**triangular**” relation: slaves from Africa were brought to America, whom in their turn worked in plantations and mines, which provided raw materials for the industries in Europe, which in turn provided goods that were used to trade with Africans.

The conditions in **slave ships** were appalling and many perished during the trip to the Americas. During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Great Britain fought to eliminate slave traffic in the Atlantic and patrolled the sea for slave ships. But, well, they didn’t do that for humanitarian reasons; slavery was giving an undue commercial advantage to sugar produced in Brazil while the English owned plantations in the Caribbean were already paying wages to their workers. Captains preferred to launch their “cargo” into the sea than to have their ship apprehended by the British.



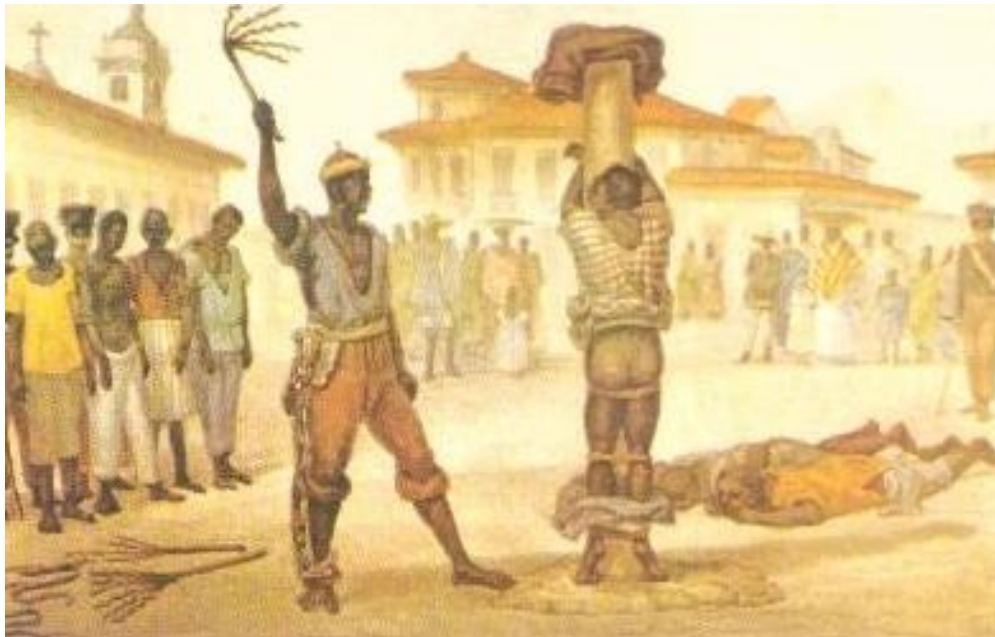
*Drawing of a cross-section of a slave ship in Brazil, from a book by Robert Walsh published in 1830. Slave ships had appalling conditions and many died during the trip. Under Public Domain.*

However, master and slave relationship was mostly very different from the dominant view of the large estate, in which the master's family was living in luxury and idleness in a great house, while dozens of slaves worked in the plantations under the whip of a foreman. With the exception of the ones working on mines and big plantations, most slaves were in fact owned by small farmers that worked side by side with them in the agriculture and that enjoyed pretty much the same life conditions than their masters. Slaves in towns fared better and had better chances of becoming free, especially women that dominated the market scene (as usually occurs in Africa) and were able to earn money, and usually had closer relations with the owner's family, increasing the chance of getting its freedom for free.

It was common that slaves in cities were allowed to sell their services elsewhere after their duties have been completed, and save enough money to ultimately buy their own freedom. They were usually owned by middle class or even poor families and women were used primarily in household tasks and men in the commerce, services and as artisans. It was common also that ex-slaves, free blacks and mulattos had their own slaves, especially during the gold economic cycle when people could make a good sum of money in a short time. Slaves could also be rented to others and masters sometimes put in their testament that the slaves should be made free upon their death.

Slaves in the cities usually enjoyed more relaxed constraints than their counterparts working in farms. However, laziness, bad behavior and especially escaping were punished with tortures and public whippings; the *Capitães do Mato* (bush captains) were specialized in searching and recapturing fugitives, a role that the police and army also participated but refused to perform in the last decades of slavery.





*Slave being punished in Salvador, by Jean-Baptiste Debret (1768–1848). Under Public Domain.*

The masters used to treat better the slaves born in Brazil than those arriving from Africa, on purpose, to create a climate of tension between those groups. Brazilian slaves enjoyed a better life and sometimes remained in charge of their African colleagues, while the latter saw them as oppressive as their white masters. In some cities like Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, the population of blacks were proportionally large, and keeping the blacks divided were instrumental in the fact that there were almost no slave revolt, since the white population feared a slave riot like the one that happened in Haiti. The few slave revolts that happened failed and were usually quelled by other blacks and mulatto soldiers. Hence, slaves preferred to simply escape to the vast interior than to risk a revolt.

Runaway slaves formed marooned villages called **Quilombos** (some communities still exist today and are protected by law). The most famous one was **Palmares**, that is estimated to count with 20 thousand inhabitants in its apex, and its leader was called **Zumbi**. They resisted some military expeditions by the government until being finally defeated in 1695. However, far from the bastions of freedom that those villages represent in the today's imaginary they were in fact replications of the African societies, usually led by runaway slaves that were nobleman in Africa before being captured, and that by its turn owned slaves as well.

As you can conclude by now, slavery was something of the everyday life and most of the time was not a moral or ethical dilemma. Due to the complex racial relations in Brazil, with a high incidence of free blacks and mulattos (many of which were sons of a slave women and her owner), slavery was not synonymous with a particular skin color as in other places, like the United States (there is even reports of white poor men being sold as slaves in Brazil). This can be seen by the high amount of participation of blacks and ex-slaves in the slave traffic and commerce. The biggest slave trader ever was a mulatto born in Africa, son of a Portuguese and a black woman, called **Francisco Félix de Sousa (1754-1849)**.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century brought the illuminist ideals and **abolitionist movements** were in place all over the World. However, the beginning of the coffee economic cycle and the need for more workforce gave a new impetus to the slave commerce, which reached its peak at that time.



Abolition was gradual in Brazil, since it was not an easy matter. The Emperor Dom Pedro II wanted to eliminate slavery but knew that the country's economy was dependent on the work of slaves and an immediate abolition would mean the ruin of the economy along with his throne. A compromise was needed. Representatives in the Legislative presented many abolitionists laws during this century, but few had success in being approved, despite all the support from the Catholic Church. In **1850**, under pressure from Great Britain, the **Eusébio de Queirós Law** was approved and prohibited the slave trade from Africa, what increased the price of slaves and sprung more illegal trafficking.

It was clear that eventually slavery would end and a plan was necessary to grant the workforce needed in the plantations. So, European **immigration** was stimulated and thousands of immigrants began to work in the agriculture, especially in the coffee plantations in the interior of São Paulo state. Many landowners preferred to free their slaves and hire the new immigrants, thus avoiding sabotage actions by abolitionist groups and the headaches of increasing slave prices and escapes.

In **1871**, the **Free Womb Law** gave freedom to children born from slave mothers. In **1885**, the **Sexagenary Law** freed slaves over 65 years old (although few reached that age). In **1886** the states of **Ceará** and **Amazonas** abolished slavery in their territories. Finally, in **1888** the 2 houses of the Legislative approved the **Golden Law** ("*Lei Áurea*") which abolished slavery in Brazil once for all, although the government would pay reparations to the owners, what actually never happened. It was signed on **13th May 1888** by **Princess Isabel**, since the Emperor was traveling abroad. However, by then the number of slaves had dropped drastically; it is estimated that less than 700 thousand slaves were freed while just 16 years earlier they accounted to 1.6 million, according to the slave census of 1872. From then on, it was a matter of time before the Empire crumbled.



*Princess Isabel is cheered from the central balcony by a crowd below in the streets, moments after having signed the Golden Law in the 13<sup>th</sup> May of 1888. Author undetermined, under Public Domain.*

## **1815-1822 – The Kingdom of Brazil and The United Kingdom Portugal**

This period had many peculiar events that ultimately led to the Independence of Brazil. And everything started with Napoleon. Thanks to the *petit caporal*!

**Dom João** (later Dom João VI, King of Portugal) was not meant to be the future king. His older brother José was being prepared to that. However, his father died in 1788 and his older brother died 2 years later, very prematurely. His mother was then the Queen, but became insane and declared unfit to govern. As Prince Regent, Dom João was to face a very delicate moment in the history of Portugal.

By the 1800s Napoleon was the conqueror of almost all Europe, except for the stubborn Spanish that were inaugurating a new kind of warfare that they called *guerrilla* ("small war"). By 1808, in the middle of the Peninsular War (referring to the Iberian Peninsula), Napoleon called for a Portugal decision: join **Napoleon** and the Continental blockade and fight the British, that ruled the sea and were a longtime ally of Portugal (the oldest alliance in the history of Europe), or stay on the British side and face an invasion by Napoleon troops. This is not the kind of situation that a sovereign of a small country would like to be: amongst 2 military powers having to choose sides. Either decision would bring heavy penalties on Portugal. Dom João tried to postpone the decision to gain time for as long as possible, but with Napoleon troops near the Portuguese border no more time was available. He finally stayed with the British and decided to move the entire Portuguese court to Brazil. Not a simple task.

In very short notice thousands of noblemen overcrowded the available ships bringing everything they could. The court tried to take every valuable object available, including the Royal Library (that later was left in Brazil and became the National Library) and the crown jewels. Soon they departed under the escort of British warships for the astonishment of the people of Lisbon. They left behind no money, no valuables and no leaders, while the people were on the verge of facing a fearful enemy. This was a very hard time for Portugal, but with the help of **General Wellington**, chief of the allies during the Peninsular War and that later defeated **Napoleon** in Waterloo, the French never conquered Portugal completely.



*Boarding of the Portuguese Royal Family and Court to Brazil in 1808. By Henry L'Évêque, 1815. Under Public Domain.*

The flotilla headed to Salvador and later **Rio de Janeiro**, where the court was to be established. Of course the sudden reception of about 15 thousand people generated many problems. People with good houses have been displaced to accommodate the nobility, while the prices of everything soared. It was the only time in history that an European court moved to the Americas and the colony became the metropolis, and the metropolis became, well... a distant part of the kingdom.

This opened the way for very important changes in Brazil. Finally the prohibition of establishing factories in Brazil has been removed, a National Press founded (the press was also forbidden), the founding of *Banco do Brasil* (still existing today, although intermittently in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century), roads were constructed and most importantly: the ports were opened to friendly nations. Before, Portugal had the monopoly on Brazilian trade but now friendly nations (read here Great Britain) could also trade. That was very convenient to the British, which with the Continental Blockade was in need for more markets for its manufactured goods.

Meanwhile, the court incurred in many debts from money borrowed from local wealthy men, which usually were conveniently paid with noble titles. The number of Barons and Marquis in the country raised a lot.

Dom João, the Regent Prince, elevated Brazil's status from Colony to Kingdom in 1815, and it was now part of the **United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and Algarves**. At the same year the queen died and Dom João finally became king, as **Dom João VI**.

But with the end of the Napoleon Wars in Europe, the Portuguese people wanted their king back. But now, they wanted a Constitutionalist Monarchy and no more an absolutist regime, one of the last of Europe; the Porto Liberal Revolution ensued in 1820. Under all those pressures and against his will

Dom João VI returned to Portugal in 1821, leaving his son **Pedro** as the **Regent Prince of the Kingdom of Brazil**, but taking everything valuable including all the treasury money, what caused the bankruptcy of the *Banco do Brasil*. The stage was set to the independence of Brazil.

## **1822- 1889 –Empire of Brazil**

### **Independence**

**Dom Pedro** has grown up in Brazil and was affectionate of the country. He had many friends, was a constant figure in the night life of Rio de Janeiro and was quite popular.

When Dom João VI left Brazil to return to Portugal in 1821 he left his son Dom Pedro as Regent Prince of Brazil. The new Portuguese Constituent Assembly in Portugal wanted to make Brazil a Colony again, but the Brazilian elite did not want to operate under the “Colonial Pact” again. The Constituent Assembly ordered Dom Pedro to return to Portugal, but under popular pressure he announced in the 9<sup>th</sup> January of 1822 to have decided to stay, in what is known as the “*Dia do Fico*” (something like “I’ll stay day”). From this day on all orders from Portugal would have to be approved by him before being applied, what made him almost a *de facto* ruler. The independency was a matter of time and each sector of the society wanted to defend their interests: the conservative elite landowners defending their privileges and the slavery, the liberals from urban centers defending more liberal reforms, the loyalists defending the union with Portugal and the Prince defending his throne. An independent country with a Constitutional Monarchy under Dom Pedro was a good compromise.

So, on the **7<sup>th</sup> September of 1822** during a trip from Santos to São Paulo he received a letter from his father demanding his return to Portugal. The conditions were already set and he was under pressure, so he decided to finally proclaim the independence. The scene was romantically depicted as Dom Pedro riding his horse (probably was in fact a mule, more suitable for long trips) on the margins of the Ipiranga river (today in São Paulo city) rising his sword and shouting “*Independence or Death!*”. He was acclaimed Emperor on the 12<sup>th</sup> October of 1822 as **Dom Pedro I**, thus creating the Brazilian monarchy. Only 2 others countries in the Americas developed an indigenous monarchy: Mexico and Haiti. All the other countries became republics after independence.





*A romanticized view of the Ipiranga Shout in the painting “Independence or Death!” by Pedro Américo (1843-1905), 1888. Under Public Domain.*

Even though he was the son of the Portuguese king the independence did not come for free; the Constitutional Assembly of Portugal would not let the colony go so easily. Portugal sent ships and troops to Brazil, which added up to the Portuguese troops already stationed in strategic areas, like in the Northeast and in the extreme south, in what is today's Uruguay. Most officers in the army were Portuguese-born and remained loyal and this created a division; parts of the Army began to fight each other.

Although in the Southeast the independence was supported and mostly secured, in the Northeast most of the elite was Portuguese-born and supported the loyalist troops stationed there. Nonetheless, nationalist troops rallied local militias and fought on, forcing the Portuguese troops to withdraw to the capitals and from there back to Portugal. The independence war was fought in the sea as well; with a dozen Portuguese war ships on the coast the newborn nation counted with very few ships, mostly in a sorry state. Brazil had to raise money in Great Britain in order to buy ships ready for battle and hire full crews, in addition to mercenary officers to fight the land battles.

The war was relatively short and was already decided in 1823, although the independence would only be recognized by Portugal and Great Britain in 1825 after the payment of a heavy reparation sum. The new country was born, although already with considerable debts.

### **First Reign (1822-1831)**

As soon as Dom Pedro I became Emperor he formed a Constituent Assembly to create the country's first constitution. However, the first constitution was too much liberal in the opinion of Dom Pedro I, which was inclined to a more authoritarian government. He dissolved the Assembly and formed a new one, more inclined to his political views. The **First Brazilian Constitution** was issued in **1824** and was the predecessor of many others to come (you'll see in the next sections).

During this time he had to fight a separatist revolution in the Northeast known as the Confederation of the Equator (1824) and the Platine Wars against Argentina (that ultimately caused the loss of a Brazilian Province and the creation of Uruguay in 1828). Those events, coupled with his authoritarian rule and big public debt led to a huge loss in popularity, which could not be solved by last minute changes in his cabinet.

Meanwhile, the Portuguese court was still not happy with losing their colony. In a last attempt to keep the Empire together the king of Portugal, Dom João VI, devised a plan. He would name his son, now Emperor of Brazil, as his successor to the Portuguese throne, so he would become the sovereign of both nations in a personal union, opening the path for a future reunification. Dom Pedro I saw an opportunity and embarked in 1826 to Lisbon to become Dom Pedro IV of Portugal upon his father's abdication. But there was a slight caveat: the Brazilian constitution did not allowed the same person to be sovereign of Brazil and Portugal at the same time. One month later he abdicated the Portuguese throne leaving it to his daughter who was still a child, future Dona Maria II, so he left the regency of Portugal to his brother Dom Miguel I.

Back to Brazil his connections with the old metropolis affairs made his popularity even lower. The early death of the beloved Empress Maria Leopoldina in 1826, in front of his open love affair with the Marchioness of Santos did not help either, along with other unfortunate events. His last attempts to reestablish support were unsuccessful and he struggled to keep the power. In 1831 he finally decided to abdicate in favor of his 5 years old son, the future Dom Pedro II, and returned to Portugal to defend the throne of his daughter that was being usurped by his brother Dom Miguel I. He fought in the Portuguese civil war that ensued, but after winning it he died of tuberculosis in 1834.

During his life he was offered the crown of Greece in exchange for fighting their war of independence against the Ottoman Turks, but he turned it down. Later was offered to him the Crown of Spain by the Spanish liberals, who were fighting the absolutists in Spain; again, he refused. Would he had accepted, Spain and Portugal would unite and form an empire stretching the entire world.

## **Regency (1831-1840)**

When his father abdicated and left to fight a civil war in a distant land, the future **Dom Pedro II** was only 5 years old and already orphan of mother. Regency was established to manage the government until the young Emperor reached the age of 18, and both liberals and conservatives took turns in power. The regency had to struggle with many important revolts, including the longest civil war in Brazil, the **War of the Tatters (1835-1845)**. Political instability was growing up with the successive political fights between the parties, so the young Emperor's tutor acted to allow his rising to the throne at the age of 15, thus granting the succession and political stability.



*Dom Pedro II aged 4. He was already orphan of his mother, and his father left to fight a civil war in a distant country, while the hopes of a nation rest on his shoulders. By Arnaud Pallière (1784-1862), circa 1830. Under Public Domain.*

## **Second Reign (1840-1889)**

Upon rising to the throne the young **Dom Pedro II** promoted political reforms that removed power from the Emperor and reinforced the role of the Parliament, along with other changes. The resulting system was considered very democratic by the standards of the time. This promoted the expected **political stability** which opened the doors to economic development and foreign investments. During more than 50 years no internal revolts and separatist movements occurred, something never seen before in Brazil. Dom Pedro II conducted politics based more on consensus than the authoritarian model of his father; nonetheless, he played an important role during all his reign.

The economy was expanding very fast with coffee produced in the Southeast consolidating itself as the major crop for export, replacing the sugar cane produced in the Northeast. However, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, abolitionist's movements and pressure from the United Kingdom decreased the number of slaves and raised their price, what caused a lack of workforce in the expanding plantations. **European immigration** was promoted, with a high number of Italians and Germans, among others, settling colonies in the South and other parts of the Southeast, while others were hired to work in the coffee plantations of São Paulo. Slowly the wage workers replaced the



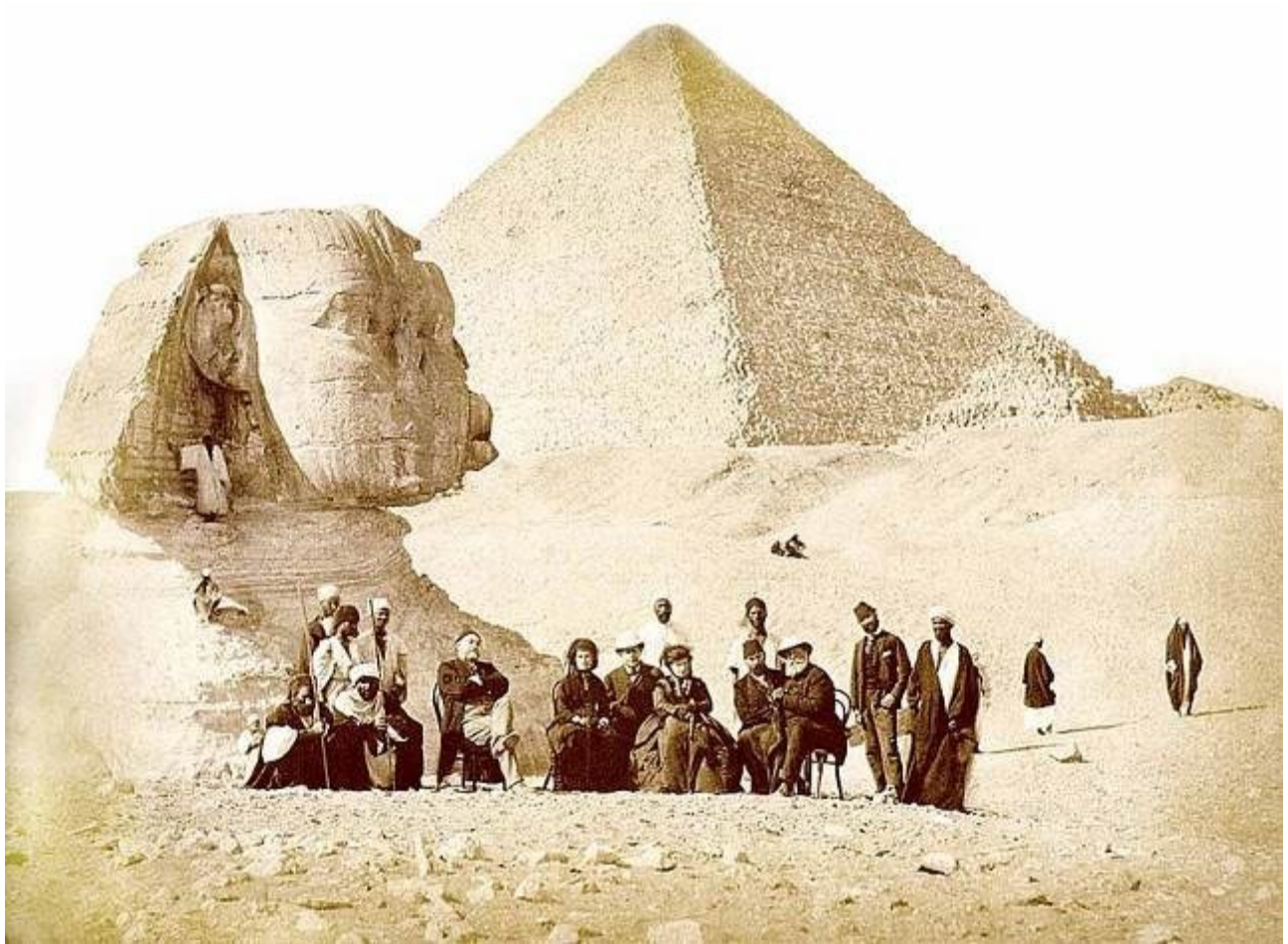
slaves in many plantations where the owners preferred the immigrants, since it was clear that the end of slavery was a matter of time.

Moreover, Dom Pedro II never had slaves, was **contrary to slavery** and promoted the abolition. In a time when few spoke openly in favor of that cause, he supported it and tried to do what was in his reach, although he knew that slavery was still very important to the economy and to the elites of landowners, which were key to grant his political support. Hence, the abolition was a gradual process and avoided ruptures.

Dom Pedro II had a **liberal and progressive** view. In addition to be in favor of abolition, he strongly defended civil liberties and freedom of speech. He constantly used the newspapers to measure the popular mood and guide his actions. He was an enthusiast of science and brought in many technological innovations to the country. He was the first to buy and use a photographic camera (in the 1840s), he promoted the construction of railroads all over the country, brought the telegraph that was later connected to Europe by a sub sea cable and modernized the Navy.

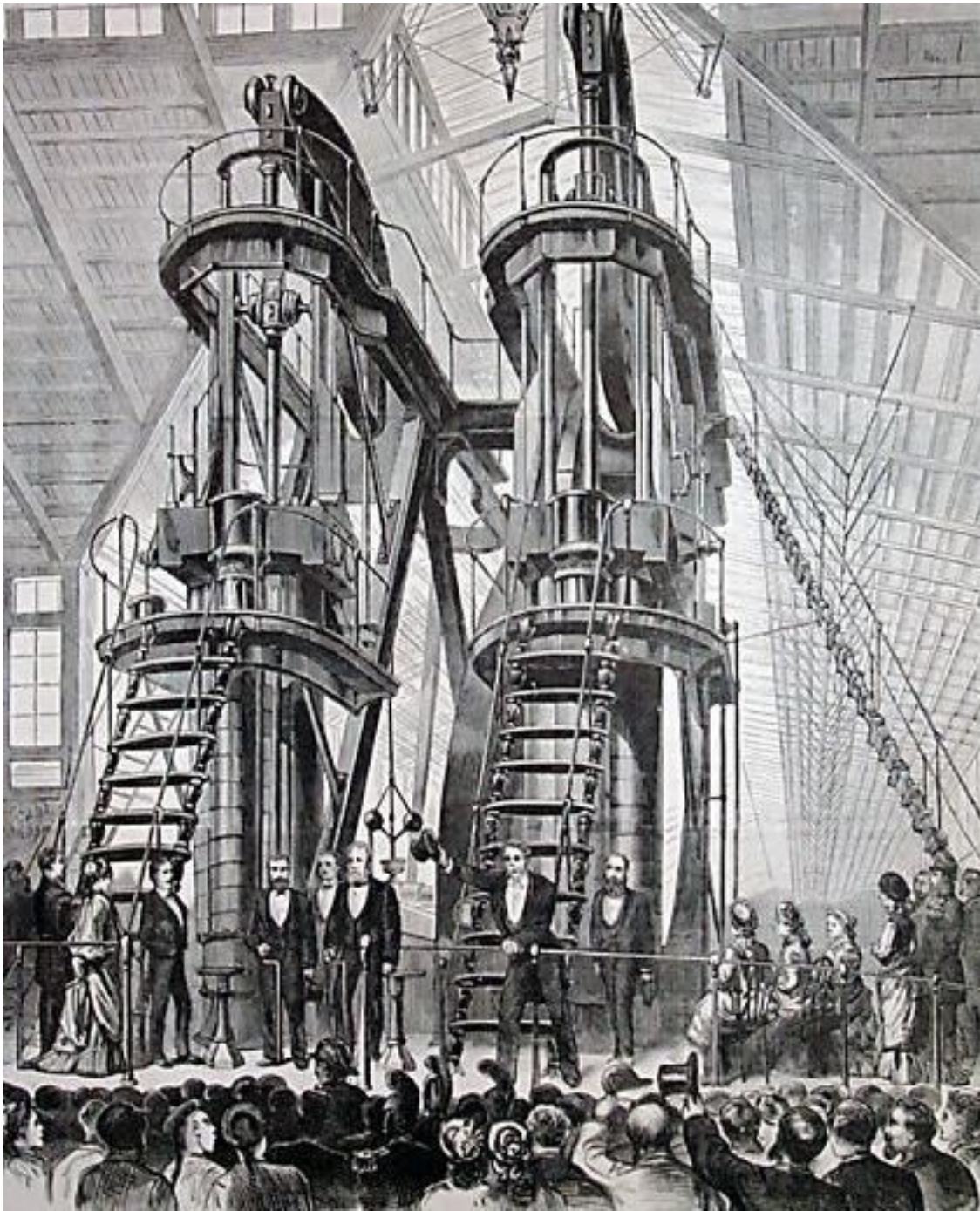
Dom Pedro II is much remembered as an erudite and patron of arts and sciences. He told about himself: "*I was born to devote myself to culture and sciences*". He had extensive knowledge of a wide range of scientific and artistic subjects and was able to read and write in 13 languages in addition to Portuguese. During his life he became friends with many famous intellectuals, philosophers, scientists and artists, exchanging letters with them, and at the same time earning the admiration of many others. Nietzsche and Victor Hugo praised his knowledge and interests, while Charles Darwin said: "*The Emperor does so much for science, that every scientific man is bound to show him the utmost respect.*" He became a member of many Scientific Societies during his travels.

He loved to travel and visited many countries. The travels offered him an opportunity to escape the burden of his office and follow his personal interests. Usually he traveled without identifying himself as the Emperor of Brazil so he could escape formal gatherings and just travel like an ordinary person.



*Emperor Dom Pedro II of Brazil, surrounded by local Egyptians during the Emperor's trip to Egypt in the end of 1871. Behind them can be seen the Great Sphinx of Giza and the Giza Necropolis. Under Public Domain.*

One of his most remembered trips is his participation in the **U.S. Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876**. During the exposition his attention was drawn by the invention of an unknown **Graham Bell**, which has been largely ignored by the judges and other exposition authorities. After testing the **telephone** prototype he exclaimed "*My God! It talks!*". Shortly after the press was all over it, with a line of other authorities wanting to check it out.



*U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant and his wife and Dom Pedro II of Brazil and his wife open the U.S. Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 in front of a Corliss Steam Engine.*

Due to his interest in knowledge he considered that education was of national importance and placed himself as an example. He used to say that if he was not an Emperor he would be a teacher, *"the noble profession of directing the minds of the young and preparing the men of tomorrow"*. After the Paraguayan War, the Parliament offered him an equestrian statue to commemorate the victory, but he refused and preferred to use the money to build elementary schools.



Other peculiarities of his actions were that he refused to receive the annual payment due to the Emperor by the government. He also lived in a strict discipline that was also imposed to his officials as well, in addition to hire them based only on meritocracy.

But being the Emperor was not easy. Around 1861 diplomatic clashes with the United Kingdom occurred when the British Counsel in Brazil created a situation around minor incidents. During the crisis the British made threats of retaliation and almost led to a war between the two countries. Despite all the pressure the Emperor did not give in. The conflict was mediated by a third country and Brazil won, resulting in an important diplomatic victory against the most powerful nation in the World.

In 1864 the Paraguayan dictator **Francisco Solano López** invaded Brazil, and soon after attacked Argentina as well, initiating the **Paraguayan War (1864-1870)**, or War of the Triple Alliance (more about that in the Military History Section). The attack got the population by surprise and the army off guard. The army stationed in the invaded regions were outnumbered and disorganized, losing many battles against the well trained enemy troops. Dom Pedro II went to the front, despite all the pressure against it, to organize and lead the troops and exposing himself to risks. He became known as the First Fatherland Volunteer, as were known the volunteer soldiers. During this time he got in contact with the brutality and atrocities committed by the Paraguayan troops against the civilian population. This, associated with his dislikeness of dictators, prompted him to a total commitment to win the war, accepting nothing less than a total victory. While others wished to end the war while the Paraguayan dictator was still in power, he convinced everyone else to carry on up to the death of Solano López in battle. After the war the Emperor had aged considerably, a sign of the effort of his commitment.

After the war, the country was in its height of international prestige and power. But things were about to change. The military gained importance during the war and got in touch with the republican ideas of their Argentinean and Uruguayan allies. From 1870 and on, republican movements grew with the support of the Army and later were joined by the coffee producers of São Paulo state, which were no longer using slaves. Issues of the government with the military and with the church complicated the situation.

At home, things were not going well also; Dom Pedro II had 4 children, but the 2 males died at an early age and his 2 daughters were not acceptable heirs to the throne. Although the law did not forbid the rule of a woman both his daughters were married to foreigners, what raised doubts about the defense of Brazilian interests. A Third Reign with Princess Isabel, the elder daughter, was a highly unpopular idea since she was also considered too much attached to the Catholic Church. By the end of 1880s Dom Pedro II was getting old and less interested in the state affairs. His only remaining political support group were the landowners that still used slaves, but after the abolition in 1888 and the government failure to pay their reparation the government was lacking any support.

The military (more specifically, the Army) decided to seize the moment and performed a military *coup d'état* led by **Marshall Deodoro da Fonseca** on the **15<sup>th</sup> November of 1889**. In fact, Marshall Deodoro da Fonseca initially did not intend to proclaim the Republic nor remove the Monarchy from power, but just change the current government cabinet that was not supported by the military. But, supported and convinced by republicans from many different paths, Deodoro finally decided to *de facto* proclaim the Republic a few days after the *coup* of 15<sup>th</sup> November, but that date is still considered the national day for this event.

The new republic was inspired by the United States and its first official name was the **Republic of the United States of Brazil**. Another indicator of that inspiration is that the flags of 7 Brazilian States resemble the American flag, with a square on the top left corner and horizontal stripes, being the São Paulo's state flag the most prominent one, with 13 stripes.



*The military in the political center of Rio de Janeiro during the coup that founded the Brazilian Republic. There was no fight. "Proclamação da República" by Benedito Calixto (1853-1927), 1893. Under Public Domain.*

The Republic proclamation did not have any popular participation, and thus was not a revolution. It was a *coup d'état* by the military with the support of some of the elites and the advocates of the republic. In fact, people were surprised by it as much and the monarchs and people in Rio de Janeiro thought they were seeing a military parade, and not a change of regime. The Emperor was still very popular, especially among the black and mulatto population that associated the monarchy with the abolitionist movements.

To the Royal Family was granted a safe passage to the exile, what Dom Pedro II accepted in order to avoid armed conflicts. After almost 59 years of reign, the family moved to France where he died 2 years later of tuberculosis in Paris. According to his diaries, his dream was to return to Brazil as a simple citizen, since he no longer wanted the throne. His last wish was to be buried with a pillow filled with Brazilian soil that he brought with him when going into exile. His funeral was accompanied by about 300,000 people in Paris, including important personalities.

But the good image of the Emperor remained. Regarded as a "wise, benevolent, austere and honest ruler", his reign was a reason for nostalgia during the First Republic and its economic and political crises.

## **1889– 1930 – The First Republic (Old Republic)**

The young republic began like a military dictatorship with the first 2 presidents being military, in what is known as the **Sword Republic**.

The **1<sup>st</sup> Republic Constitution** (and 2<sup>nd</sup> of Brazil) was issued in **1891** and was heavily inspired by the United States Constitution. Among its important changes was the separation between the state and church, the establishment of general elections with a more universal electorate (many were still excluded) and gave citizenship to all immigrants. Only in 1894 a civilian president took office, inaugurating the **Republic of the Oligarchies**.

The political system of the Republic of Oligarchies was based on the “**Coffee and Milk**” policy, in which presidents of São Paulo and Minas Gerais states would alternate in power; the name comes from the main agricultural products of each state, respectively. This policy was supported by the “**Governor’s Policy**”, which gave more power to the states and thus strengthening the federalism, in a country in which the power usually concentrated in the central government. This power was given in exchange for political support to the presidents through the use of “**coronelismo**”, a kind of regional oligarchy.

The “**Coronéis**” (rulers of coronelismo) were regional leaders from the elite (usually rich landowners) that granted the political support to their candidates through control of the local population, especially in the rural areas. The area where he had control was called “**curral eleitoral**” (electoral corrals), a term still used today to define regions where candidates have more support. This control was made easy by the current electoral system in which the vote was open (not secret).

Although the Republic was nominally democratic the women and illiterate people were not allowed to vote, while they represented a sizeable portion of the population; nonetheless, this was a progress in relation to the previous electoral system which required men to have a minimal annual earning to vote.

The electoral system was prone to all kinds of interferences. The **Coronéis** could force people to vote in a specific candidate through the use of economic power (buying votes, exchanging favors or economic retaliation) or by pure violence and threats. The **jagunços** were armed bodyguards and militias that would make sure that people voted in the chosen candidate; sometimes they would provide ballot papers already fulfilled. This practice was known as “**voto de cabresto**” (bridle vote). Other actions were common, like casting “ghost” votes and frauds. Unfortunately this system still present traces in Brazil, especially in the poorer regions where people have their votes “bought” more easily, although frauds by locals in the ballots are improbable with the electronic voting system.



*"As próximas eleições... "de cabresto"" (The next elections... "in the bridle"), a political cartoon published in 1927 by Storni referring to the bridle vote. Under Public Domain.*

This period saw lots of internal revolts and conflicts of every nature and kind, including the bloodiest internal conflict of Brazil, the **War of Canudos (1893-1897)**. A small participation in **World War I (1914-1918)** granted the presence of Brazil in post-war negotiations and in the creation of the **League of Nations**.

The economy based on **coffee** export was going well, with a Stock Exchange of the product in the city of Santos, gate to the exportation. The **rubber** economic cycle began in the North, bringing prosperity to Manaus and other cities of the Amazon region.

**Industrialization** gained momentum and the money from exportation was used to build up infrastructure, mainly in the Southeast. **Immigration** continued, now with waves of **Japanese** and **Arab** immigrants, among others, especially to the cities of São Paulo state. **São Paulo** turned into an industrial, commercial and cultural pole of the country.

However, the New York Exchange crash of 1929 brought an economic crisis, weakening especially the coffee exporter's oligarchy that saw the demand and price for their product fall all over the World. The higher levels of urbanization weakened the power of agricultural oligarchies, while generating different demands from the urban population. The path was open for political reforms.

## **1930 – 1945 - Vargas Era**



Despite the entire economic crisis that ensued after the 1929 New York Exchange crash, the presidential elections of 1930 saw the victory of the current president's candidate, **Júlio Prestes de Albuquerque**. However, as always in the Old Republic, the elections suffered the rigging of the Oligarchies. The loser candidate, **Getúlio Dorneles Vargas**, saw an opportunity to seize the power and did not recognize the victory of his opponent. Vargas was from Rio Grande do Sul state and seek to end the hegemony of São Paulo landowners in politics. Supported by the urban sectors and landowners from outside São Paulo, revolutionary troops marched into Rio de Janeiro and exiled lots of leaders from the Old Republic, mostly from São Paulo state.



*Getúlio Vargas smoking a cigar during the 1930 revolution. By Claro Jansson. Under Public Domain.*

### **Provisional Government (1930-1934)**

Upon grasping the power Getúlio Vargas instituted a **Provisional Military Junta** in order to govern while a new Constitutional Assembly was elected and formed to issue a new constitution. Meanwhile, he had unlimited powers and was a *de facto* dictator, and nominated federal administrators to govern the states replacing the governors.

Vargas was a **caudilho** (from *caudilhismo*), that were **populist** leaders with a great charisma, common in Latin America in the following decades. He was liberal and progressive and had his own vision on how to promote development. Soon he began to promote reforms in various sectors.

However, his continuous postponement to issue the new constitution and his dictator powers did not please the São Paulo elite, which used to be the one in power. Gathering support from many other sectors of the society by promoting Vargas as a cruel dictator, they started the **Constitutionalist**

**Revolution in 1932.** Although troops from other states were supposed to join São Paulo, they failed to do so and the government defeated the revolution in 3 months, despite Vargas not having strong political support from the military.



*Poster from the Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932 promoting the draft of soldiers. The M.M.D.C. present in all posters from the period refers to the initials of 4 young men that died during demonstrations for a new constitution before the war. Author unknown.*

Although the conflict was short, it was very intense and saw the use of modern weapons, like the airplane. The true intention of the revolution was to depose Vargas, but as Vargas needed support in the rest of the country to fight it, the government propaganda spread that São Paulo was trying to separate from the rest of the country. Nonetheless, the revolution passed to history as claiming a new constitution, what ultimately it achieved despite being defeated in the battlefield.

### **Constitutional Government (1934-1937)**

The Brazil's **3<sup>rd</sup> Constitution** was issued in **1934**, bringing innovations like the secret vote and many other social reforms and welfare policies. It also stated that the first president was to be elected indirectly by the Constitutional Assembly, and guess what? Vargas won.

Now, Vargas was governing under a constitution and at the side of a Legislative Assembly. By this time politics in the World was being polarized by communist and fascist movements. Brazil was no exception and both movements were created, called **Aliancismo** and **Integralismo**, respectively. A climate of political instability followed.

In 1935 the communist party led a tentative revolution, called **Intentona Comunista**, with the support of some military and from the Soviet Union, but was rapidly crushed and communism was banned and persecuted by Vargas. Later in 1938 the fascists tried to depose Vargas, but were not more successful.

## **Estado Novo (New State) (1937-1945)**

In 1937 the presidential elections scheduled to 1938 were getting near and Vargas was not eligible to be reelected. Thus, Vargas denounced a supposed communist plan to take power supported by Moscow, called **Cohen Plan**. This announcement, added to the current political instability, eased the acceptance of a new dictatorship by Vargas.

The **4<sup>th</sup> Constitution** was issued in **1937** and created the “**New State**”, with an authoritarian and centralized power around Vargas. He suppressed political parties, closed the Congress and censored the media, effectively holding a lot of power in his hands.

Despite all the powers in his hands and persecution to political enemies, this period saw a “*benevolent dictatorship*”. Vargas had a **populist** rhetoric, defending the urban workers rights and the peasantry though **paternalistic** policies, which brought the support of the masses. Meanwhile he had to conciliate that with the interests of landowners and other political elites. Although he indeed promoted many social reforms and passed laws to protect workers, he also reinforced the power and dominance of the agricultural landowners, which still operated in a system of quasi-feudalism in the Northeast. During this time the government promoted his image and he entered in history as the “*Father of the Poor*” and “*Savior of the Country*”.

He increased the role of the government in the economy promoting the economic nationalism. Industrialization and urbanization were priorities and many industrial state companies were created, along with a wide modernization of the state. The nationalism reached the culture as well and national symbols and cultural manifestations were created or given prominence, including the carnival parades. Discipline, order and love for the country were promoted everywhere. Vargas dictatorship had many traces in common to the fascist regimes in Europe, which counted with the support of many important figures in the government. This led to tight diplomatic ties with Italy and Germany, but soon it proved to be the source of a hard decision.

When the **World War II** began Brazil remained neutral. After the entry of the United States in the war, the pressure increased for their American continent allies to help in the war effort. The Brazilian natural and agricultural resources were important, including the very valuable rubber that saw a second economic cycle in this period, since the Indonesian rubber was under Japanese control. Moreover, the Northeast coast was in a strategic position to the logistics for the North African and European war theaters, along as serving as base to patrol the South Atlantic.

But Brazil was not clearly inclined to any side. The government had strong relations with the axis countries while depending economically much more on the United States. Vargas tried to remain neutral as long as possible while negotiating a good deal with the American government. But with the sinking of a series of Brazilian merchant ships by German U-Boats in 1942 the public opinion pressed

for retaliation and Brazil joined the allies. In exchange for the raw materials and base placements Brazil received the financing to build the ***Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional*** (CSN), the first modern steel-maker of Brazil.

Vargas did not intended to send troops to fight in the war; he used to say that it was easier to a “snake smoke” (a common expression for something improbable, since snakes lack arms) than to Brazil send soldiers to the war. The people pressed and finally he gave in and sent the **FEB** (Brazilian Expeditionary Force) to fight in Italy in 1944 (their motto was “*The Snake Smoked*”), along with the newly created 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group, all of them trained and equipped by the United States (more on that in the Military History Section).



*Brazilian soldiers of the FEB in Montese, Italy. By FEB. Under Public Domain.*

Upon the end of World War II and the demise of the fascist regimes it didn't make sense to keep a similar regime at home and pressure for democratization begun. In 1945 the military performed a *coup d'état* and Vargas, with no support left, renounced and returned to Rio Grande do Sul, while a provisional government was installed and called for elections in the same year.

## **1945 - 1964 – The Second Republic (New Republic)**

In 1946 the 5<sup>th</sup> **Constitution** is issued and is much more democratic than the previous ones. In 1951 **Getúlio Vargas** became president again, but this time through popular vote (as he stated: “*he returned to power in the people's arms*”). He began an economic nationalistic period that saw the creation of **Petrobrás** (the state oil company) and an ambitious industrialization plan. While he pleased many sectors of the society he suffered heavy opposition from the military and communists. In 1954 he was accused of ordering a failed assassination attempt on an oppositionist journalist and

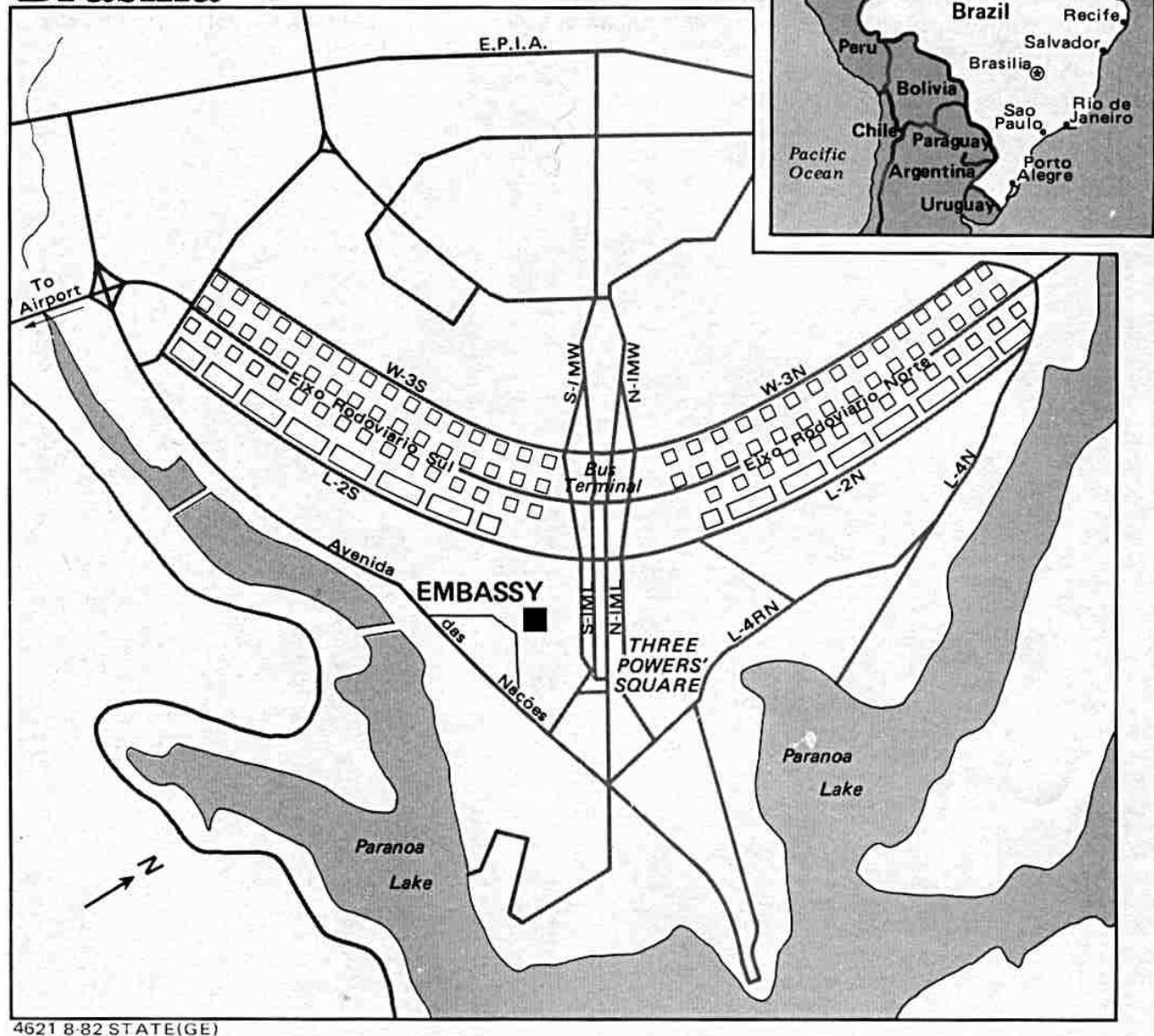
faced an imminent military *coup*. He preferred to commit suicide shooting himself in the heart. In his suicide letter he supposedly wrote "*I quit life to enter history*". And indeed he did.

In **1955**, **Juscelino Kubitschek**, a political ally of Getúlio Vargas, was elected and his motto was to develop the country "*50 years in 5*". He instituted development policies, many of which favored multinational companies and foreign business, which in turn would provide cheap capital for his projects.

In **1960** he moved the national capital from Rio de Janeiro to **Brasília**, located in the central plateau and on the geographical center of Brazil. The idea of establishing the capital on a more central region of the country was not new and has been around since the time of the Empire. The idea was to bring development to the interior of the country, while keeping the federal government more accessible to the whole country.

The city was planned and built following a modern architecture style, with everything well spaced and with wide avenues to support all the cars needed to go around (at that time pedestrian and bicycle traffic was not valued as in modern city planning). A lake was built in order to increase the local humidity of the dry central plateau. Brasília was planned in the shape of an airplane, symbol of development and progress, with its wings pointing north and south (they are actually called North and South wings in maps) and the main government buildings located in the cockpit region (the federal government nervous system), as if the government is controlling and steering the country.

# Brasilia



*The city plan of Brasília, constructed in the shape of an airplane, with the main government buildings in the "cockpit". Plan by United States CIA, under Public Domain.*

In **1961** the populist **Jânio Quadros** became president with promises to clean up the politics from moral corruption, with his campaign symbol being a broom. However, he tried to approach the communist block countries, mainly for economic reasons, and even decorated the communist guerrilla leader **Che Guevara** with a medal, what the right wingers saw as an evidence of an imminent communist *coup*, like the one that recently had happened in Cuba. He also promoted anti popular measures and lost public support as well. Jânio Quadros decided to renounce but the moment was not appropriate (or was quite good, depending on his controversial intentions): the vice-president, **João Goulart** (known as Jango) was in China (a communist country) in a diplomatic mission, and the military already regarded him leaning to communism as well, not a good thing during the Cold War.



A compromise solution was found: Brazilian government was to become **parliamentary**, thus reducing the power of the president. The parliamentarianism was short lived, as in 1963 João Goulart called for a plebiscite that approved the return to presidentialism. Meanwhile, his government and leftist ideals (like widespread land reforms, nationalization of industries and so on) did not please the conservative sectors of the society (much of it a middle class raised by the successful policies of its antecessors) and the economic elites. In addition, he had a series of conflicts with the military high command. Finally, on 1<sup>st</sup> April of 1964 (and it was no joke) the military performed a *coup d'état* and exiled him. The military dictatorship period would begin.

It is interesting to note that almost all the governments from 1930 to 1964 were populists. Up to 1945, under Getúlio Vargas, it had strong parallels to European fascism, and from then on established an approach to socialism, with its apex under João Goulart, ironically a *protégé* of Vargas. Left or right winged, what all of them had in common was the approach to a popular base (urban workers, peasantry, poor) through populist policies, while keeping the interest of the elites well provided.

## **1964 – 1985 - Military Government**

In 1964 began the most controversial period of the Brazilian recent history, and for sure this book does not intend to fuel those controversies. This period still reverberates today, with national politics being biased in right and left wings, authoritarian and liberals. Persecuted leftists became current political leaders, including the last three presidents: Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> April of 1964 a military *coup d'état* removed the left-wing president João Goulart from power, and the right-wing Army Generals became the *de facto* rulers of the country. The motivation and justification of the *coup* that was given to society was to defend the nation against communist movements that were seeking to take power; hence, the *coup* is usually referred to as a “**counter-revolution**”. The military government would be temporary, taking just enough time to assure institutional security to the return of democracy; however, time would prove not to be so. This model of right-wing military regimes was followed by other Latin American countries like Uruguay, Chile, Argentina and others. By the 1970s those regimes would eventually join a cooperative action to fight leftist movements in those countries, known as “Operation Condor”.

The military did not performed the *coup d'état* alone and counted with the support of many civilian sectors, including the conservative sectors of the society, political elites, big landowners, media moguls and sectors of the Catholic Church; meanwhile, the mass of poor people remained alienated to the political movements of that time. The *coup* was also supported by the **United States** that feared a new “Cuba” situation in South America and included Brazil in its interventionist policies, common at that time (the support of the United States in the *coup* is not a conspiracy theory; it is a proven historical fact). The United States moved a Navy fleet to the coast between Rio de Janeiro and Santos, which would act in case the *coup* encountered armed resistance, what did not happen; this operation was called “**Brother Sam**”.

However, as authoritarian the new regime wanted to be, it was necessary to keep an apparent democracy. The support of the United States, that defended the liberal democracy against the communist regimes, would not make sense in sponsoring the defense of democracy by destroying it in the first place. Thus, the military abstained from a personal dictatorship by requiring each general-president to hand over power to his replacement after an established term period.

The military government was headed by a series of 5 Army Generals elected indirectly by the Congress and they governed for a total of 21 years (from 1964 to 1985). Elections were still held for congress representatives, governors and mayors, with the exception for mayors of large cities and the ones deemed as strategic, to which the federal government appointed an administrator. However, elections suffered heavily from political constraints imposed by the regime to the opposition and the congress was closed for some periods.

**Institutional Acts** (*Als – Atos Institucionais*) were issued during all the military dictatorship period to amend the current constitution, mainly to legitimize acts that would otherwise be contrary to the constitution and to give more powers to the president. At the end of the regime they amounted to 17. The first ones issued were used to legitimize the new military government.

In the elections of 1965 the regime lost the elections for governors in the most important states and the military were concerned on their hold to power. In a response to that, in the same month the government issued the **AI-2** that established that all current political parties were extinct and that were allowed only 2 new parties: **ARENA**, the government's party, and the **MDB**, a well-behaved opposition (that was the core of the current PMDB party, the biggest of Brazil). The caveat is that the ARENA should always have the majority in Congress. It was also given the power to the president to control the opposition, as representatives with strong opposition would have their mandates repealed and their political rights disenfranchised; many gave up politics or went into exile. The Congress was temporarily closed in 1966 and continued to exist only to demonstrate an apparent democracy.

In 1967 the country name was changed from **Republic of the United States of Brazil** to **Federative Republic of Brazil**. In the same year it was issued the **6<sup>th</sup> Constitution** of Brazil, imposed by the military government without any Constituent Assembly. It was adapted to the new regime, which from now on would adopt a more "hard line".

After all those facts it was clear to the society that the military government did not intend to reestablish democracy so soon and the restrictions on political and civil liberties were very unpopular. Many sectors of the society that supported the *coup* in the beginning now removed their support. By 1968 the regime struggled with strong opposition of the population, with huge street demonstrations by students and worker's movements that were suppressed with violence by the security forces, in addition to conflicts between factions that supported the regime and the opposition.



*Huge street demonstrations happened against the dictatorship in 1968, a year marked by manifestations all over the world. The protester writes "Down the dictatorship". Author undetermined.*

The response of the government was the creation of more stringent laws and the infamous **AI-5** has been issued. Civil liberties were decreased, political disenfranchisement was made easier, the power of the executive increased in relation to the other branches of government and it was declared a nationwide state of siege. Arbitrary arrests and collection of information were allowed in the name of national security. Opposition had to move to underground movements.

In 1969 the constitution underwent amendments and became more authoritarian. The years with the highest levels of repression (1968-1975) were known as "**lead**en years". And with it started the "**dirty war**", the repression by a large state apparatus of leftist underground movements and *guerrillas*.

While part of the opposition stuck with a "democratic" opposition through the MDB, another part decided to take on arms and start a *guerrilla* style fight. The problem is that those movements were very fragmented with lots of small leftist *guerrilla* groups from different orientations and organizations.

**Guerrilla groups** operated in remote regions in the countryside and in urban areas as well. Those groups attacked army bases, robbed banks and performed bomb attacks, killing civilians and soldiers in the process. The most daring operations were the kidnapping of ambassadors and consuls to exchange for political prisoners; the ambassadors of US, Germany and Switzerland were kidnapped, among others, what resulted in enormous embarrassment to the military government.

The period with the most intense repression was under president **Médici** (1969-1974), that by 1974 defeated armed guerrillas in the countryside and quelled most urban movements. The means of this repression is subject to investigations and controversy even nowadays. Arbitrary arrests, tortures, murders, disappearance of people, persecutions and censorship were commonplace. Parts of the Catholic Church started denouncing human rights violations and priests were also persecuted.

People went into **exile**, forced or by themselves. Many prominent artists moved abroad to escape censorship and intellectuals with leftist leanings also left the country by fear. Eventually they would

return and many of those intellectuals would form part of the new political leadership after the dictatorship.

Media **censorship** was very strong, with government organizations dedicated to regulate content before they were released. Newspapers (even those that initially supported the *coup*) sometimes would have entire sections of articles censored which spaces were fulfilled by texts from classical literature as an act of protest. Movies and TV also were under strong censorship and books were banned, sometimes just because the author name seemed Russian. Nothing bad or questioning the government or its practices were allowed.

At the same time, mass **institutional propaganda** was created in order to keep the population moral high and grant support to the regime. The propaganda had a very nationalistic aspect and most of the time highlighted the greatness and beautiful nature of the country. A famous slogan of the time was: "Brazil: love it or leave it" ("*Brasil: Ame-o ou deixe-o*"), in a message to motivate oppositionists to leave the country.

The dictatorship reached the height of its popularity in the 1970s with the Brazilian "economic miracle" going on, and to top it, the Brazil winning its 3<sup>rd</sup> World Cup in 1970, even though the regime censored all the media, tortured and banished dissidents.

The Brazilian "**economic miracle**" unfolded between 1968 and 1973 and was a period of high rates of GDP growth. The country was opened to foreign capital and many multinational companies were installed and the big landowners began producing mainly for export. Meanwhile, large public projects were completed, as the bridge between Rio de Janeiro and Niterói and the Itaipu Dam, along with general infrastructure including many railroads and roads. Development of the North was given impulse by the construction of the Trans-Amazonian highway and the creation of a tax relief industrial zone in Manaus, which still represents an important manufacturing center in Brazil. Important government organizations were created as the Central Bank and the Federal Police, along with important state companies.

But not everything was rosy with the economy. The income inequality (already a major problem in Brazil) got worse, with the rates of poverty actually increasing. The public debt grew enormously, inflation rose and the oil crisis of 1974 aggravated the situation since most of the country's fuel was imported. At this time the ethanol for car use has been developed in order to decrease the dependency on external oil sources. A worldwide economic crisis ensued and in Brazil would eventually persist to the end of the 1980s.

Seeing its popularity decreasing due to the economic situation the government decided in 1974 for a more democratic political system, allowing more space to the opposition. The government announced a plan to reestablish democracy, but as described by the president, in a process of "slow, gradual and secure opening".

In this period the opposition party, the MDB, grows a lot and risks the control of the government in the next elections. Then, in 1977 a new set of rules were issued in order to grant the victory of the government party; this set of rules were known as the "**April's Pack**". However, in 1978 the infamous AI-5 has been revoked, reestablishing many civil and political rights.

In 1979 it was decreed a **total amnesty** to political crimes to everyone involved in both sides of the conflicts and reconciliation should follow without questioning the past. Many people were allowed to return from exile and the opposition got stronger. In the same year it was decreed the end of the

bipartisan system and soon many opposition parties formed in order to accommodate all the different political views, that previously had to forcedly coexist within the same opposition party, the MDB.

By 1983 the economic crisis is aggravated by the worldwide scenario, leading to a situation of stagnation and high inflation, known as **stagflation**. A series of strikes and public protests ensued and presidential elections with civilian candidates were prompted to 1984. However, the first civilian president in decades would be elected indirectly by the Congress. Huge street manifestations demanding direct presidential elections occurred all over the country, called “**Diretas Já**” (Direct Now). However the constitutional amendment that would approve the direct elections could not reach the minimum votes necessary and direct elections would only occur in 1989, after the new Constitution was issued in 1988.



Ma

*Manifestations for direct presidential elections. This movement was known as “Diretas Já”. Author undetermined.*

The candidate **Tancredo Neves** won the **indirect elections** but died in the hospital before taking office, so in 1985 the vice president, **José Sarney**, took the office as the first civilian president in 21 years, effectively ending the military dictatorship period. Ironically, while Tancredo Neves was from the opposition’s party and was elected based on his good reputation and conciliatory approach, José Sarney was a long-time supporter of the regime and from the government’s party, from which dissidents (like himself) disbanded when it was clear that the military government would eventually end.

## **1985 – current - Return to Democracy and the New Republic**



The **7<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Constitution** was issued in **1988**, the result of the work from a Constituent Assembly created in 1986. It has officially reestablished democracy along with civil and political rights, freedom of speech and direct and free elections. Among other novelties was the welfare state, that would provide universal healthcare, education and other public services, aimed to decrease social inequalities and promote social justice (what would eventually cause a steady increase in the tax rates which are used to sponsor those services).

But that constitution did not represent the rupture from the old regime that many were expecting for. The Constituent Assembly was formed by the representatives of the Federal Deputies Chamber, that acted simultaneously on both assemblies and were not directly elected by the people; many of them were representatives of the previous government as well. Many aspects of this constitution were not properly reformed or the changes were left somewhere in the middle as a compromise solution between the old and new powers.



*The Constituent Assembly celebrates the promulgation of the new Constitution in 1988. By Agência Brasil, used under a Creative Commons License.*

President **José Sarney** got the country in a bad shape. Democratic institutions were not solid and the economy was plagued by stagflation. The government tried three economic plans to control the hyperinflation (that reached 84% per month in 1990) but all of them had short term results and failed in the long run. They were all based on controls over prices, prices and wages freeze and ultimately the change of currency (during his term Brazil had three currencies). At least in 1990 he was able to hand over the office to the first directly elected president, **Fernando Collor**.



Collor was the first president directly elected since the 1960s. He was from a recently created and small party and won the elections based on his charisma and due to the discontent of the population towards the policies of the traditional parties formed by the politicians from the opposition to the military regime. His campaign motto was to fight the government corruption, and, of course, the hyperinflation.

He also created his economic plan to control the hyperinflation, this time freezing the saving accounts and financial investments so the consumption would decrease along with the inflation. He also changed the currency again. Despite the initial success this plan also failed to control the hyperinflation (the average annual inflation from 1990 to 1995 was 764%).

He took important steps to open the economy and allow modernization, although the abrupt lifting of import barriers took the national industry by surprise and it was not able to compete with cheap products from Asia and elsewhere, resulting in generalized bankruptcy and increase in unemployment, eroding his popular support even more.

He was accused by his own brother of a corruption scheme related to campaign money funding. Investigations by the police and the Congress followed and the media and other sectors of the society promoted his **impeachment**. Huge street protests followed, with heavy participation from students that used to paint his faces in the colors of the flag or in black, so they became known as the “*cara-pintadas*” (painted faces).

Even though in the beginning of his term he had a very strong popular support, his party failed to elect any significant base on the legislative and he was soon in a very weak position. He finally was impeached by the Congress and lost its political rights for eight years, but later was elected as Senator.

The vice-president **Itamar Franco** took office. His finance minister, **Fernando Henrique Cardoso** (FHC), headed a new economic plan to establish economic stability and control the hyperinflation, the “**Plano Real**” (“Real Plan”). Despite the heavy skepticism of a new economic plan, due to the failure of all the previous ones, the plan was implanted in 1993 and in 1994 the new currency was in place, the “**Real**”. The plan was successful and kept the inflation around 6% a year. The key to control the hyperinflation was to establish very high base interest rates (at the time about 40% a year), an economic policy still used today to control inflation.

The successful economic plan opened the doors for the election of FHC which governed for 2 terms of 4 years each. During his government the highest priority was to preserve the achieved economic stability. The economy followed a more neo-liberal recipe, opening many sectors of the economy held by the government to private companies and following a privatization plan of state companies, including the areas of telecommunications and mining. The government also created regulatory agencies to regulate sectors of the industry.

The government had to take austere measures that were very unpopular, since it was necessary to shrink the government spending to pay the external debts (including to the International Monetary Fund) and increase reserves, while controlling the inflation. Meanwhile a series of international financial crisis in the late 1990s (Mexican, Argentinean, Russian, East Asian) prompted the government to adapt the economic policies and made harder the government’s job in securing the economic stability.

**Luís Inácio Lula da Silva**, more well known as a charismatic “Lula”, won the elections of 2002 after 3 earlier failed attempts. He would be later reelected and govern a total of 8 years. He is an ex-blue-

collar worker and his family a retiree from the poor regions of the Northeast, a humble background unseen in presidents of Brazil. Since he was from an extreme left party (the Worker's Party or *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT) that by now was more left-centered, the financial market suffered from the uncertainty regarding the future economic policies, but soon the new government demonstrated that would keep the economic policies from the previous government.

During the mid-2000s the economy developed well propelled by the worldwide prosperity and high prices of commodities, the main Brazilian exports. The good growth rates put Brazil in the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa), the group of emergent countries. In the international sphere, Brazil positioned itself as a leader of the Latin American countries and a voice for the developing nations. In this period Brazil was selected to hold the **FIFA World Cup** in **2014** and the **Olympics** in **Rio de Janeiro** in **2016**.

Social programs created in the previous government were broadened and implanted nationwide, like the "*Bolsa Família*" among other social programs, which are getting some results in decreasing the income inequality. Unfortunately his government was plagued by a series of corruption scandals, the most important one known as "*mensalão*" and linking persons near to the president to the buying of political support, money laundering and other crimes of corruption.

The worldwide economic crisis of 2008 affected Brazil as well, but government stimulus to the already heated internal market helped to keep the growth.

**Dilma Rousseff**, one of Lula's most important members in the previous government, was elected in 2010 and became the first woman to be head of state and government of Brazil. Although the economy was still struggling to keep the growth, the government kept the investments on social programs and kept stimulating the economy through policies and investments in infrastructure, although the latter suffers from repeated delays because of state bureaucracy and lack of planning.

During this time she achieved approval levels never seen before, higher than her predecessor, even though she is not as charismatic as him. However, by mid-2013 the inflation was getting higher and living costs increasing steadily for many years now. In this context, the raise of urban transportation fares was the last drop to a broader range of popular dissatisfactions. To make things worse, the FIFA Confederations Cup were being held and attracted popular hostility, that accused the government of spending money with football stadiums while leaving healthcare and education under funded.

People took the streets everywhere in the country, and **demonstrations** in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro were the largest since the time of the military dictatorship, while the riot police was blamed of using violence to repel the protesters. Hostility was directed towards mayors, governors and legislative representatives as well. The main claims were for better healthcare and education, against the delays on infrastructure projects, against the impunity of corruption and for political reforms. The federal government proposed a plan to address those concerns, including a referendum for **political reform** that never took off.

The year of 2014 promised to be busy, with the World Cup on the way and federal and state elections in October. Furthermore, another major scandal went to prominence when the federal police arrested a group of administrators and money launderers that were deviating large sums of money from **Petrobrás**, the largest state company; the investigation further led to government contractors, parties and politicians (whose identities are still undisclosed) in what seems to be the most expensive corruption scheme in the history of Brazil.

The **World Cup of 2014** occurred amidst some isolated protests, still vestige of the 2013 protests from which promises from the government were not fulfilled, and also propelled by widespread accusations of overpriced stadiums and promised infrastructure projects that were not completed. Nevertheless, the event was carried out with no major hiccups. Brazil was defeated by Germany at the semi-finals by a humiliating 7 to 1 score, adding this game to the list of “traumatizing” events of the recent Brazilian history; Germany won from Argentina at the finals and won the Cup for the fourth time.

During the **run for president** the candidate in the third place in the pools, Eduardo Campos, died at an airplane crash and his more popular vice-president companion, Marina Silva, assumed the candidacy and went up to second place, very near from the current president running for reelection, Dilma Rousseff. At the end, the candidate Aécio Neves went to the second round, but Dilma ultimately won the reelection by a narrow margin in the most disputed election of Brazilian democratic history.

The year of 2014 ends up with the president reelected, but with increasing economic challenges and low economic growth, fierce political opposition, popular dissatisfaction and a major corruption scandal under investigation.

To add to the mix, a lasting drought is threatening water supply to urban centers and hydroelectric power generation, the main electricity source of the country.

We'll have to wait for the events that will unravel in 2015.

## 19. Military History

Brazilians like to think about themselves as a peaceful people. In the international scenery this may be true, since Brazil never engaged in aggressive acts against other nations, and always preferred diplomacy and negotiations to solve disputes and adopted a neutral stance in face of foreign conflicts and foreign internal matters.

However, when it comes to internal conflicts this conception is far from the truth. Probably few countries in modern history can boast such a long list of revolts, insurgencies, movements, separatisms and *coups* than Brazil, especially during the periods of colony, First Reign, Regency and First Republic. Nevertheless, all of them were eventually quelled by a strong central government, even though some required more than one attempt or took some years; those government victories granted the territorial integrity and national unity, although delaying some social and economic progresses. Some of those internal conflicts were short or had very few casualties, others were lengthy and bloody and could be easily classified as a regional civil war, and some became notorious by brutal events or fanatical resistance.

The military history of Brazil in external conflicts is a short chapter. The only international wars Brazil was involved were the following:

### **Cisplatine Wars (1825-1828, 1851-1852, 1864-1865)**

Those were a set of 3 wars fought in the Plata river region. The first one was fought between Brazil and Argentina over the territory that is now Uruguay, what ultimately led to the creation of Uruguay as a compromise solution. The other wars were fought with the involvement of Brazil and Argentina over Uruguay's internal political issues, both of which sought political hegemony over the country's affairs.

### **Paraguayan War (or War of the Triple Alliance) (1864-1870)**

Without going too much into the reasons for the war and the historical details, what you should know is that there was a very bloody war between Brazil, Argentine and Uruguay against Paraguay, that at the time was governed by a dictator that invaded Brazil and Argentina and kept his country at war even after it was clear that he could not win anymore. The result was the estimated death of 90% of the Paraguayan population, mostly the male population, along with a very high casualty on the civilian populations of the other countries, many of them from diseases and famine. The military also experienced high rates of casualties. Proportionally, this is considered the most devastating war in the modern history, and ultimately led to Paraguay being the less developed country in South America.

This was a very difficult war to fight, in a very harsh environment and terrain, with too many diseases that caused a high level of casualties among the civilians and military. It also featured very peculiar naval battles fought in the large rivers of the region, with full sized military ships being also attacked by artillery on the margins. It also counted with the participation of many black soldiers, many of which were slaves that received the promise to be set free upon surviving the war.

The war was very bloody, but had important effects in Brazil that ultimately led to the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889. The military got prominence after the war and they carried on the republican ideas they got from their allies, which were already republicans (Argentineans and Uruguayans). It also accelerated the process of the slave abolition and made the empire incur in enormous debts.

### **World War I (1914-1918)**

Brazil kept neutral for most of World War I, benefiting from exports to both sides. Then some Brazilian ships were sunk by German submarines and Brazil declared war. However it was too late and the only real contributions to the war effort were sending a medical detachment to the western front, and an escort mission of transport ships by the Navy. The Navy however saw some combat, with German submarines sinking a ship, and the Brazilian ships being credited with one submarine kill. During the trip to Gibraltar strait many crew members fell to the Spanish flu during the stops and this delayed a lot the arrival at the destination. When they arrived at Gibraltar the war had just ended. But just before that, a very peculiar incident occurred: the Brazilian crew mistakenly identified a swarm of harbor porpoises ("*toninhas*"; it's a "type" of dolphin) with a German submarine periscope; they opened fire and killed the entire swarm, in which is known as the ***Battle of Toninhas***.

## **World War II (1939-1945)**

When Brazil declared war on the Axis Forces in 1942 (to know the reasons, see the History section), the Brazilian military was obsolete and in no condition to fight a war in Europe. With American assistance and equipment, Brazil was able to send a division of about 27,000 soldiers to the Italian front in 1944 (less than 1 year before the end of the war), that was incorporated in the American 6<sup>th</sup> Army. This force was called **FEB** (*Força Expedicionária Brasileira*, Brazilian Expeditionary Force), and its soldiers were affectionately called *Pracinhas*. This Brazilian group was the only mixed and not officially segregated force in Europe during the war, despite the prejudice of many officers in the army.

The Italian front was considered a secondary front by this time at the war, but nevertheless the Brazilian troops fought very well in bitter battles at the Italian hills, to the surprise of the allied high command. After the war, the good performance of the Brazilian troops was recognized by the American army.

During that time the Brazilian troops were well regarded by the local Italian population, and also got a fame of treating well their prisoners of war, what led to a high number of detainees, since the Germans preferred to surrender to the Brazilian troops instead of the Americans.

In the meanwhile, the Brazilian Air Force was created with its first fighter group. Trained by the Americans and later equipped with P-47 Thunderbolt aircraft, the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group fought in Italy mostly in the ground attack role, achieving an impressive record of destruction behind enemy lines, while the Brazilian pilots performed about three times more missions than their American counterparts. After the war the American government awarded a unit medal to the group.

During this time, the Brazilian Navy, helped by American and Brazilian aviation, patrolled the coast of South America and sunk some German submarines. The United States built their biggest base outside the United States in Natal, near the most eastern point of the Americas, as logistical warehouse for the North African and European theaters, and as a base for patrolling planes as well.

## **Nowadays**

After World War II, Brazil didn't get involved in other foreign conflicts. However, Brazil had modest participations in UN Peacekeeping missions since the 1960s. The only high profile activity performed recently is the participation in UN Peacekeeping missions in East Timor and in Haiti, where Brazil plays a significant role.

## **The End – Part 2 of 2**

Congratulations! You have read the entire eBook! You now know a lot about Brazil. And if you are a Brazilian, I'm sure you learned a thing or two about the country as well.

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